

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF STATE PATROL**

**EXAMINING STRESS LEVELS OF DSP ENFORCEMENT  
PERSONNEL AND INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES  
FINAL REPORT**

PROJECT ID: 0092-01-07

**STEP 1: INTERNAL DSP STRESS EVALUATION**

**STEP 2: COMPARISON OF DSP TO OTHER LAW  
ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

**STEP 3: RESEARCH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS  
SUCCESSFUL IN REDUCING STRESS**

**STEP 4: RESEARCH OTHER AGENCY METHODOLOGIES  
AND INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES**

**SUBMITTED TO:  
THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

APRIL, 2002

**PREPARED BY:  
THE DIERINGER RESEARCH GROUP, INC.**

## ***DISCLAIMER***

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16. Abstract			
<p>Anecdotal information indicates that sworn law enforcement personnel throughout the country experience high levels of job stress. This study is an attempt to better understand the occupational stress levels among Wisconsin Division of State Patrol (DSP) sworn personnel.</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> This research project has attempted to document and quantify more objectively whether sworn DSP personnel have higher levels of worker's compensation claims, sick leave usage, turnover or early retirement compared to other WisDOT employees and to personnel in other law enforcement agencies. In addition, potential intervention techniques are summarized, such as training programs and outreach to personnel and families.</p> <p><u>Expected Benefits:</u> This initial study has identified possible avenues for future programs to improve overall health, work productivity and ways of doing business in DSP. It is anticipated that additional efforts will build on these research findings.</p>			
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## ***Executive Summary of Steps 1 and 2 (3 & 4)***

At the request of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), The Dieringer Research Group (The DRG) conducted a study of stress among sworn officers in the Division of State Patrol (DSP). The overall goal of this project was to compare and assess the levels of work-related stress that exist among DSP sworn personnel. That information was then compared with DSP unsworn personnel, and non-DSP personnel, throughout the WisDOT workforce and other law enforcement agencies and organizations throughout the country.

The initial scope of the WisDOT research project was comprehensive. This report includes the findings from Steps 1-2 of that project. The project's initial work plan included the following six steps:

1. Evaluate WisDOT/DSP Data
2. Compare DSP To Other Comparable Agencies  
*Note: Step 2 included a benchmark that stated, "if the results and conclusions indicate the DSP sworn law enforcement personnel experience usually high levels of work related stress, the research investigation would proceed to the next step."*
3. Research Other Organizations Successful In Reducing Stress
4. Research Other Agency Methodology And Intervention Techniques
5. Develop Evaluative Methodology
6. Develop Intervention Techniques and Resources

### **Step 1**

Step 1 of this research project produced findings that are of high relevance to WisDOT as it continues to research ways to reduce stress among sworn officers and consisted of two phases.

The first phase was an examination of the WisDOT personnel database and time and travel reporting system for demographic information relative to the DSP sworn law enforcement personnel. This demographic information included such things as age, gender, ethnicity, position type, service date, and marital status. Behavioral data such as injuries/sick time, grievances, disciplinary actions, and personnel transactions were also studied. Secondly, we compiled the same type of information from both DSP unsworn personnel and other non-DSP employees within the organization for comparison with the DSP sworn personnel data. All information was reported using position numbers, with the employee's name removed, in an effort to maintain anonymity of all subjects.

The second phase consisted of an anonymous mail survey sent to the homes of 530 DSP sworn officers. Survey respondents were asked to return completed surveys to DRG where their responses were tabulated and analyzed in late February/early March of 2001. This survey was very useful in that it provided a profile of the attitudes and opinions of 362 or (68%) of DSP sworn personnel.

Both the data analysis and survey instrument were developed to protect the anonymity of DOT personnel. As a result of this effort, the responses from the survey and the WisDOT database could not be combined; thus, individual levels of stress identified in the survey and their relation to the supposed consequences of stress, identified in the database analysis, could not be determined. Based on the information available from the database analysis, it is also not possible to determine if DSP sworn personnel have a higher incidence of the consequences of stress than other WisDOT employees. In addition, there were no data on officer retention in the survey, because officers who had quit the department were not included in the survey.

## ***Executive Summary of Steps 1 and 2 (3 & 4)***

The following provides key findings from the mail survey (additional information is contained in Section I of the Step 1 report):

- **DSP sworn personnel are highly stressed.**
  - 51% rated their job-related stress as high -- a “4” or “5” on a “1 to 5” scale
  - 53% said that all or most of the officers they know suffer from job-related stress
- **DSP sworn personnel do not feel that the DSP is very concerned about their stress.**
  - 22% said their immediate supervisors were concerned -- 4” or “5” on a “1 to 5” scale
  - 13% said other DSP management staff were concerned
  - Only 9% of Troopers and Inspectors said that “other DSP management staff” were very concerned
- **The two most often cited reasons for job-related stress were related to the officers’ superiors. These were the only reasons cited by a majority of officers.**
  - 66% of the officers cited “Superiors ‘second-guessing’ your actions”
  - 54% cited “Your superiors at DSP”
- **Among higher ranking officers or their superiors, job related stress was most often cited as a result of a combination of too many pressures and paperwork.**
- **Older officers, higher ranking officers, and officers who had been in DSP longer appeared to be more stressed.**
- **Almost all the officers had experienced critical incidents. For example:**
  - 90% had seen victims who were killed or badly injured
  - 76% had a near-miss in the line of duty
- **Officers with more stress had experienced more critical incidents. They also suffer from more symptoms of stress, such as irritability and sleeplessness. Officers with more stress also took significantly more time for sick leave, disability leave, and survey respondents reported taking medical leave of absence.**
- **There was a high level of awareness of services available to treat stress. For example:**
  - 99% were aware of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
  - 74% were aware of critical incident stress training and debriefing

## ***Executive Summary of Steps 1 and 2 (3 & 4)***

- **However, officers with more stress did not tend to use stress management services more than those with less stress.**
- **Officers overall rating of counseling services is mixed**
  - Of those who had used EAP or other professional counselors, 50% rated them highly -- “4” or “5” on a “1 to 5” scale
  - Of all the officers, whether they had used the services or not:
    - 28% rated other (non-EAP) services highly
    - 22% rated drug/alcohol treatment highly
    - 22% rated the external EAP program highly
    - 9% rated the internal EAP program highly

The mail survey conducted in Step 1 was the beginning of a needs assessment process relating to stress for DSP law enforcement personnel. WisDOT hopes to build on the survey process for usage in other areas of the organization.

### **Step 2:**

Step 2 of the research project provides a literature search of law enforcement agencies and other organizations that have taken specific measures in an attempt to reduce employee stress. The key findings of Step 2 are:

- **It indicates that one of the main causes of stress within law enforcement organizations is the organization itself.**
- **It provides a justification for the development of a needs assessment process as an initial stage in the reevaluation of the department’s stress management program and other related activities.**
- **It provides a justification for a WisDOT pilot program aimed at measuring and reducing stress levels among DSP sworn personnel, with a primary focus on reducing organizational stressors.**

Note: The Step 2 Literature Search Findings follow the Step One Report – Final Findings.

Overall, comparing the results of the mail survey to the literature search findings seemed to indicate that the WisDOT DSP sworn officers are typical of other sworn law enforcement personnel in other parts of the country. They experience high levels of stress and the main cause of the stress is the organization. It appears that officers who do stay in the department do not “get used” to the stress; the officers with more time in the department tend to be more stressed. In addition, the sworn personnel are aware of the department’s stress management services but usage of those services remains underutilized.

## *Executive Summary of Steps 1 and 2 (3 & 4)*

### **Steps 3 & 4**

Because of funding constraints, we were not able to complete the project in its entirety at this time. So far, the outcome has produced an excellent building block for subsequent work and analysis in the area of work related stress in both the DSP and other areas of the organization. It is hoped that if and when funds become available, the department will complete the project. In the meantime, the organization will continue its efforts by offering its employees and their family members access to counseling services to alleviate the effects of stress.

**Overall Recommendation:** The information compiled to date indicates that it would be beneficial for WisDOT to develop a plan of action for a pilot program (including a fully developed needs assessment process, along with a pre- and post-test design) aimed at measuring and reducing stress levels among DSP personnel, with a primary focus on reducing organizational stressors.

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**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF STATE PATROL**

**LAW ENFORCEMENT  
STRESS STUDY**

PROJECT ID: 0092-01-07

**STEP 1: INTERNAL EVALUATION  
FINAL REPORT**

**SUBMITTED TO:  
THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**REVISED  
SEPTEMBER, 2001**

**PREPARED BY:  
THE DIERINGER RESEARCH GROUP, INC.**

# INTRODUCTION



# ***Introduction***

At the request of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), The Dieringer Research Group (The DRG) is conducting a study of stress among sworn officers in the Division of State Patrol (DSP). The overall goal of this project is to compare and assess the levels of work-related stress that exist among DSP sworn personnel and DSP unsworn personnel; and also to compare DSP sworn personnel with other personnel within the WisDOT workforce; and other similar organizations.

The entire study consists of six steps:

- Step 1: Evaluate WisDOT/DSP Data
- Step 2: Compare DSP to Other Comparable Agencies
- Step 3: Research Other Organizations Successful in Reducing Stress
- Step 4: Research Other Agency Methodology and Intervention Techniques
- Step 5: Develop Evaluative Methodology
- Step 6: Develop Intervention Techniques and Resources

If the results and conclusions from Steps 1 and 2 indicate the DSP experiences unusually high levels of work-related stress for the law enforcement personnel, the research investigation will proceed to Phases 3, 4, 5 and 6.

This report covers Steps 1 and 2 only. Step 1 consists of two phases. The first phase is an examination of part of the WisDOT/DSP personnel database, including demographics of WisDOT employees (e.g. age, gender, position, marital status), and behavioral data such as injuries/sick time, grievances, disciplinary actions, and personnel transactions. The second phase consists of an anonymous mail survey of sworn officers in the DSP.

Step 2 was primarily a literature review of available information undertaken to compare DSP stress levels and the resulting organizational impact with other law enforcement agencies.

## **Research Objectives**

The principal objective of the entire study is to help WisDOT/DSP understand stress among sworn officers and to assist WisDOT/DSP in developing appropriate and feasible intervention techniques that will help officers reduce and/or more effectively deal with stress. The study's more specific objectives include:

- To determine the levels of stress among the DSP sworn personnel
- To determine the causes of the stress
- To find methods to help sworn officers reduce and/or deal with the stress
- To compare levels of stress among different classifications of sworn officers (e.g. compare troopers and sergeants or men and women)
- To compare stress levels among DSP sworn personnel, DSP unsworn personnel, and WisDOT employees who do not work in DSP
- To develop methodologies and intervention techniques that may be used to evaluate other areas of high stress within WisDOT

# ***Introduction***

## **Methodology**

### **Step 1 - Phase 1: Database Analysis**

In order to examine/analyze the WisDOT database, the WisDOT provided several key databases and/or reports.

- WisDOT employee demographic information (including title, age, marital status, gender, race, years of service, and employee group) for 1996 through 2000
- Injury Time and Incidents for 1996 through 2000
- Sick Time and Incidents for 1996 through 2000
- Employee Grievances for 1995 through 2000
- Disciplinary Actions for 1995 through 2000
- Fleet accidents (sworn) for 1996 through 2000 and Accident Summary Report for Worker's Compensation Claims for 1994 through 2000
- Termination Incidents for 1996 through 2000
- EAP Initial Consultation Reports (Employee and Supervisor) for 1998-2000

The demographic, injury time, and sick time databases were merged into one database, with individual records matched by each employee's position number. In order to merge these files accurately, duplicate position numbers, regardless of class code or employee birth date, were deleted. Overall, a minimal number of records were deleted in each of the three employee groups (A-DSP sworn personnel, B-DSP unsworn personnel, or C-non DSP personnel) proportionately.

The Employee Grievances, Disciplinary Actions, Fleet Accidents, Accident Summary Report, Termination Incidents, and EAP Consultation Reports were tabulated and summarized individually. Only two years of EAP Initial Consults were analyzed due to the incompatibility of EAP reports from previous years.

The Detailed Findings for this phase are found in Section II of this report.

### **Step 1 - Phase 2: Sworn Officer Stress Study – Mail Survey**

In an attempt to get a high response rate for the mail study, WisDOT mailed a notification letter announcing and explaining the study to the homes of all DSP sworn officers. This letter was developed jointly by WisDOT and The DRG and was sent prior to the questionnaire distribution. Also, an announcement was made in the district Green Sheets. The district Green Sheets were also used as a reminder notice.

The DRG mailed questionnaires and a postage paid envelope, addressed to The DRG, to the homes of all 530 sworn officers on February 15, 2001, using labels provided by WisDOT. The DRG was not provided mailing information for the sworn officers, nor did it retain a copy of the mailing labels.

## Introduction

Of the 530 questionnaires distributed, a total of 362 completed questionnaires were returned to The DRG by the deadline date of March 7, 2001. This equates to a completion rate of 68%, which is substantially higher than the response rate for mail studies in general.

All questionnaires were anonymous in that no identifying codes were used on the questionnaire to track respondents nor were any questions asked that would uniquely identify a respondent (such as position number or birth date). Because of the need for anonymity, data from Step 1 (WisDOT database) and Step 2 (mail survey) were not matched or merged in any way.

During the data tabulation, significance testing of percentages (z-tests) and means (t-tests) was conducted at a 95% confidence level. For an explanation of significance testing and confidence levels, please see the Statistical Reliability and Limitations section in Appendix B.

In general, the respondents to the mail study are representative of the DSP sworn personnel overall. A demographic comparison of the questionnaire respondents and the actual WisDOT DSP sworn personnel (Year 2000) is shown in the table below.

The Detailed Findings for this phase are found in Section I.

<b>COMPARISON OF 2000 SURVEY RESPONDENTS TO ACTUAL 2000 DSP SWORN EMPLOYEES</b>		
	<b>DSP Sworn Personnel Survey Respondents</b>	<b>Actual DSP Sworn Personnel<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>N=</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>472</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	85%	86%
Female	15%	14%
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 29	16%	16%
30 – 39	39%	39%
40 – 49	35%	33%
50 – 59	10%	12%
<b>Title</b>		
Trooper	67%	64%
Sergeant	10%	11%
Inspector	18%	19%
Other	4%	5%
<b>Years of Service</b>		
Less than 5 years	20%	20%
5 to 9 years	14%	20%
10 years or more	66%	60%

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<sup>1</sup> Source: WisDOT

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS



# *Mail Survey Summary and Conclusions*

## **Introduction**

At the request of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), The Dieringer Research Group (The DRG) is conducting a study of stress among sworn officers in the Division of State Patrol (DSP). The overall goal of this project is to compare and assess the levels of work-related stress that exist among DSP sworn personnel and DSP unsworn personnel; and also to compare DSP sworn personnel with other personnel within the WisDOT workforce; and other similar organizations.

The information contained in the Mail Survey Summary and Conclusions reflects the outcome of the second phase of Step 1, an anonymous mail survey of all the sworn officers in the DSP. Prior to the questionnaire mailing, an introductory letter was mailed to the homes of all DSP sworn personnel on February 15, 2001. The survey questionnaire was mailed, again to the homes of DSP sworn personnel, the following week. No formal reminder mailing was instituted, however a reminder notice was placed in the district newsletters. Of the 530 questionnaires distributed, a total of 362 completed questionnaires were returned to The DRG by the deadline date of March 7, 2001, securing a response rate of 68%.

## **Mail Survey Summary**

- The most common sources of stress for sworn officers are factors that are present in almost all jobs, such as “second guessing” or superiors’ actions. While sources more specific to law enforcement, such as danger on the job, are stressful to some officers, the more generic bureaucratic problems are more stressful overall.
- There seems to be an incrementally increasing level of stress among the sworn officers. More time on the job leads to more stress. Stress is higher among older officers, higher ranking officers, and those who have been sworn officers longer.
- Troopers report a high influence of stress from superiors. Higher ranking officers cite other officers and a combination of too many pressures as the most frequent source of stress. Both types of DSP sworn employees say shift work and paperwork also influence their stress levels.
- Generally, most sworn officers do not think their immediate superiors, other DSP management staff, or the union is concerned about job-related stress. The higher ranking officers (sergeant – colonel) are more positive about the perceived concern of their superiors and other DSP management staff, but most of them do not rate the concern of these groups as high. The only high ratings come from troopers rating the perceived concern from their peers.
- There is a clear link between experiencing stress-producing events and the incidence of stress. Those officers who rate themselves as more stressed have experienced stress-producing events more often than other officers have.



## ***Mail Survey Summary and Conclusions***

- There is also a clear relationship between stress producing events and talking with professional counselors. Those that had talked with professional counselors were significantly more likely to say they had experienced the stress producing events listed in the questionnaire. They also had used more hours of sick leave, disability leave, and medical leave of absence. And, as one might expect, they tended to be older and to have served longer as sworn officers.
- There is widespread knowledge of DSP services to treat stress, especially awareness of the EAP. However, few officers use these services. In most cases, usage of counseling services seems to happen after the officer has experienced many of the stress producing events, a “later than sooner” type approach. Most officers, including those who label themselves as highly stressed, deal with their stress informally by talking with other officers, their families, and/or their friends outside the department.
- Few stressed officers reported using EAP services, including officers who seek professional counseling elsewhere. Whether the respondent had used EAP or not, it seems the EAP may not be thought of as particularly useful. In rating the EAP, the sworn officers tend to give it only a medium rating of usefulness (2.89 with 5.00 being Very Useful). In fact, the usefulness of EAP among those who had used professional counseling (including EAP or other outside services) was not significantly different than those who have not sought counseling.

### **Mail Survey Conclusions**

- It seems apparent that DSP sworn personnel are highly stressed, and that the stress level builds as the officer’s age, time on the job and title increase. Actions taken in response to job-related stress also change as the officer’s age and time on the job increase.
- These results show that a large source of their stress comes from their superiors, with the source of stress sometimes differing by job title or demographic profile.
- DSP sworn personnel generally seem to have a stressful work environment, with a perceived lack of management support or concern. Sworn personnel appear to have a low opinion of the usefulness of any type of professional counseling service available, possibly the reason for the overall low utilization of them. Of those who do use them, many do not consider them to be particularly helpful.

Overall, different types of DSP sworn personnel (e.g. job title) have different job stressors and react differently to them. Stress reduction programs should be cognizant of the differing sources, experiences, and responses to law enforcement stress for the differing types of DSP sworn personnel and have an individualized plan or customized approach for each to best deliver the appropriate help.

# ***Database Analysis Summary and Conclusions***

## **Introduction**

At the request of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), The Dieringer Research Group (The DRG) is conducting a study of stress among sworn officers in the Division of State Patrol (DSP). The overall goal of this project is to compare and assess the levels of work-related stress that exist among DSP sworn personnel and DSP unsworn personnel; and also to compare DSP sworn personnel with other personnel within the WisDOT workforce; and other similar organizations.

The information contained in the Database Analysis Summary and Conclusions reflect the outcome of the first phase of Step 1, an examination of available information from the WisDOT Personnel Database, Time and Travel Reporting System, and various other WisDOT data reports. The databases include information on the demographics of WisDOT employees and behavioral data such as sick and injury leave, grievances, disciplinary actions, and personnel transactions.

## **Database Analysis Summary**

- Consistently since 1996, DSP sworn personnel have a lower likelihood of taking time off for sickness than DSP unsworn and non-DSP personnel, and when they do so, they take off fewer hours than other WisDOT employees.
- Regarding injury claims, DSP personnel have a higher likelihood of submitting a worker's compensation claim than non-DSP personnel. DSP sworn personnel also take more hours of injury leave than other comparison groups. However, DSP occupations are different than that of other WisDOT personnel, typically being more hazardous in nature.
- In general, DSP personnel are more likely to be involved in a disciplinary proceeding or to submit a grievance. Although DSP represents only 17% of the entire WisDOT workforce, they represent 42% of all disciplinary proceedings and 49% of all grievances. The most common type of disciplinary action against DSP personnel is the result of work performance or attendance. The most frequent reasons for DSP grievances are due to reimbursement of time/money, hours of work, and disciplinary actions.
- Controlling the data for the progression from academy cadet to trooper/inspector, there seems to be an increasing trend in the number of personnel transactions, from 17% in 1996 to 27% in 2000.

## **Database Analysis Conclusions**

- Based on the information available from the WisDOT, DSP personnel seem to have definite behavioral differences than non-DSP personnel, especially regarding the likelihood of injury, the number of disciplinary actions, and grievance filings.
- Determination of the behavioral differences between DSP sworn personnel, DSP unsworn and non-DSP personnel was not always feasible, nor reliable, due to the fact that not all information could be obtained from a centralized database. The solution, an integration of WisDOT databases/computer systems, is beyond the scope of this step, but can be discussed if deemed necessary.

**DETAILED FINDINGS**  
**SECTION I**  
**MAIL SURVEY**



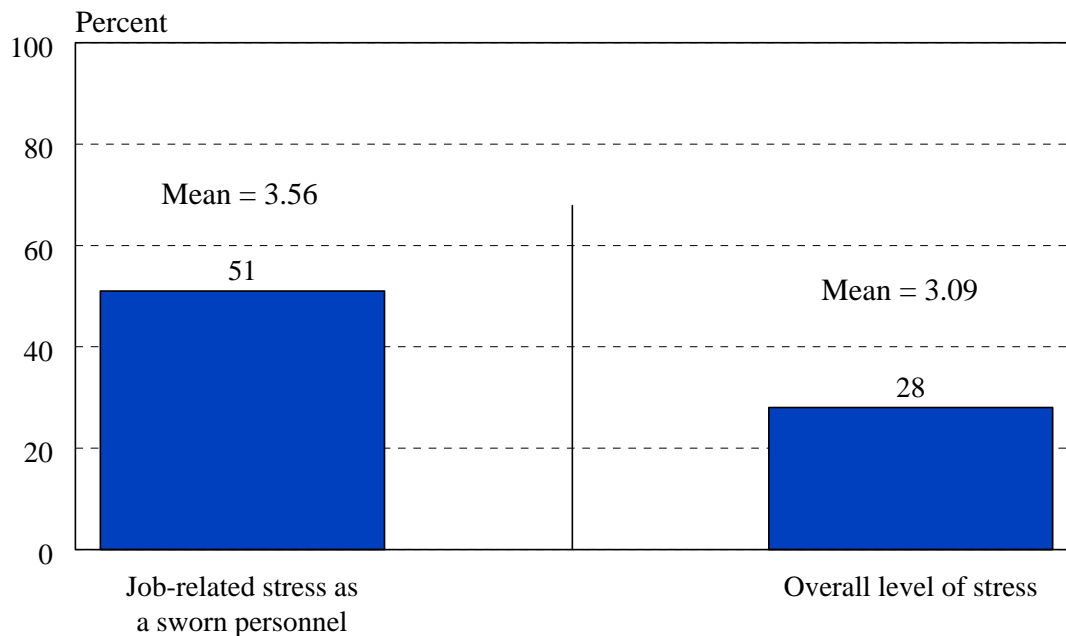
## Section One: Mail Survey – Levels of Stress

### Levels of Job-Related Stress and Overall Stress

Respondents were asked to rate their level of job-related stress as sworn personnel and overall stress (including work, family, or any other type) using a 5 point scale with “1” meaning “Not At All Stressed” and “5” meaning “Very Stressed.”

The sworn personnel indicate that their job-related stress is higher than their overall stress, with an average stress level of 3.56 and 3.09 respectively. Over half (51%) of the officers say they have high levels of job-related stress (total “4” and “5” ratings) while about one-fourth (28%) have high levels of overall stress.

**Levels of Stress**



Source: Data Tables 1-2  
N = 362

## Section One: Mail Survey – Levels of Stress

### Levels of Stress by Demographic Group

Demographically, it appears that aging, length of service, or increased responsibilities tend to lead to job stress. Sworn officers who are older, have been sworn officers longer, or have supervisory/managerial jobs are most stressed on the job. For example, while only about one-third of the officers under 30 years old have high levels of job-related stress, over half of the older officers—and 58% of the oldest—have high levels. Similarly, 58% of officers with ten or more years of experience have high job stress levels.

This general pattern is also true for overall stress. However, overall stress levels are lower than job stress levels for all demographic groups.

While women have higher stress levels than men, the differences are not statistically significant.

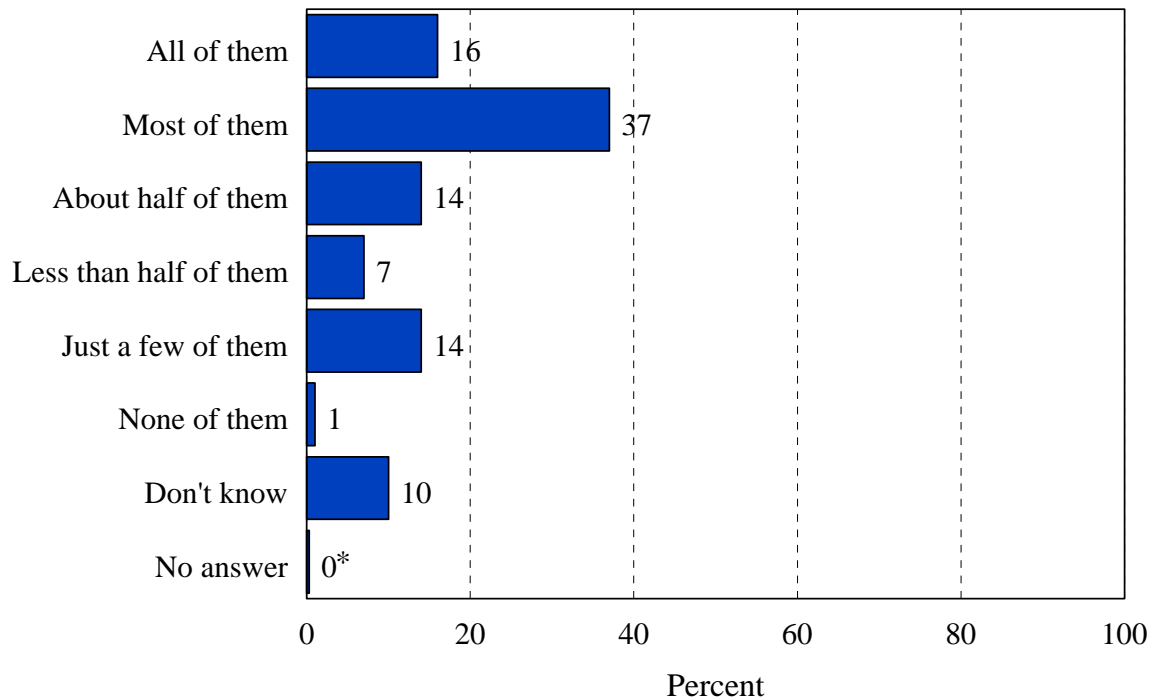
<b>LEVELS OF STRESS BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP</b>					
<b>Demographic Group</b>	<b>N =</b>	<b>Job-Related Stress</b>		<b>Overall Stress</b>	
		<b>Average Level</b>	<b>Percent Highly Stressed*</b>	<b>Average Level</b>	<b>Percent Highly Stressed*</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>	362	3.56	51%	3.09	28%
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	307	3.53	50%	3.06	26%
Female	54	3.69	57%	3.25	35%
<b>Age</b>					
18 – 29	59	3.27	34%	2.85	19%
30 – 39	141	3.50	51%	2.89	19%
40 – 49	126	3.68	57%	3.35	38%
50 +	36	3.82	58%	3.35	39%
<b>Job Title</b>					
Trooper	244	3.52	50%	3.05	26%
Inspector	66	3.41	41%	2.92	21%
Other (Sgt. - Col.)	51	3.90	67%	3.45	41%
<b>Time as Sworn Officer</b>					
< 5 years	72	3.13	28%	2.85	17%
5 - 9 years	52	3.52	50%	2.92	19%
10 + years	238	3.70	58%	3.20	33%
Source: Data Tables 1-2					
*Percent “4” and “5” ratings on a 5 point scale (“1”= “Not At All Stressful” & “5” = “Very Stressful”)					

## Section One: Mail Survey – Perceptions of Stress

### Perception of Officer Stress

Over half of the survey participants said that all (16%) or most (37%) of the officers they know suffer from job-related stress.

**Proportion of Officers Known by Respondents Who Suffer From Job-Related Stress**



Source: Data Table 30

N = 362

\*Less than 0.5%.

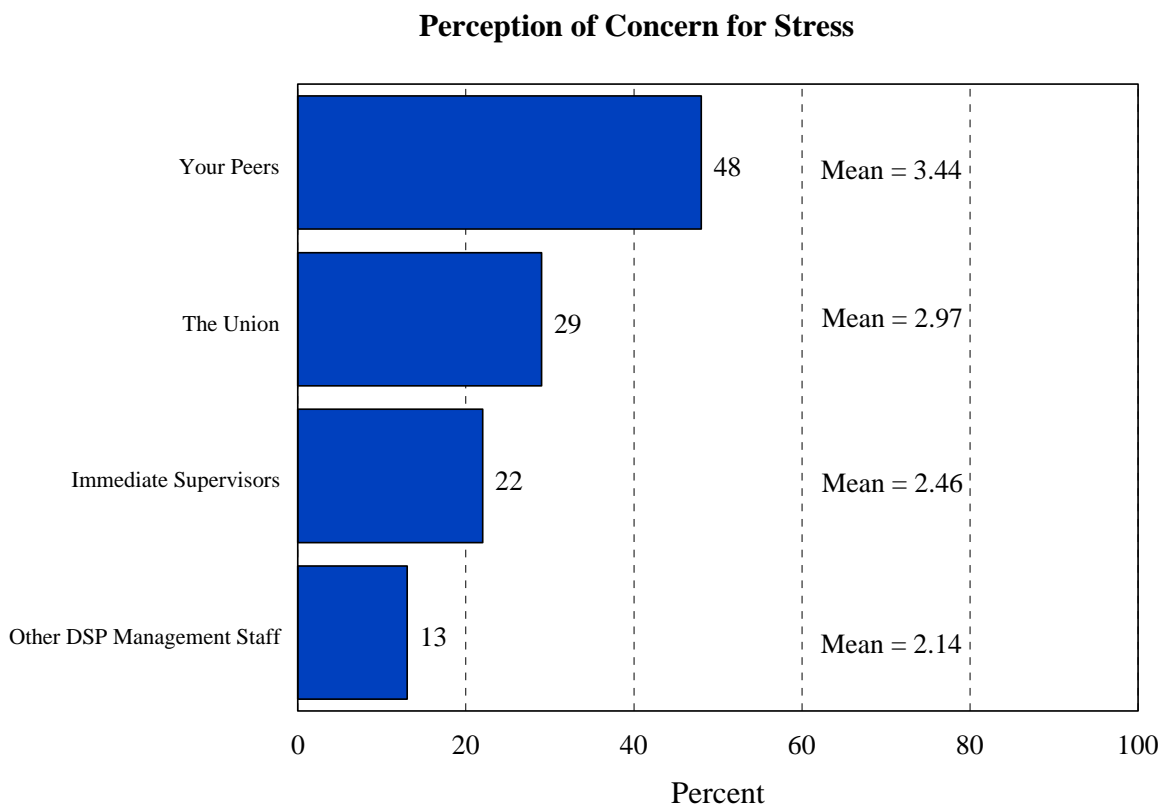
## Section One: Mail Survey – Perceptions of Stress

### Perception of Concern for Stress<sup>2</sup>

All survey respondents were asked for their opinions about how concerned four groups of people are about job-related stress among sworn officers. They used a “1 to 5” scale with “5” being “Very Concerned” and “1” being “Not At All Concerned.”

Of the four groups, respondents felt that their peers and the union are the most concerned; 48% gave their peers high ratings of “4” or “5” and 29% gave the union such high ratings.

In the opinions of the respondents, immediate supervisors and other DSP management staff are the least concerned; only 22% gave immediate supervisors high “4” or “5” ratings, and only 13% give other DSP management staff high ratings.



Source: Data Tables 62-65  
N = 362

<sup>2</sup> In order not to bias the results, this question was asked after respondents rated the level of stress caused by a list of factors, which included superiors and other officers (peers).

## Section One: Mail Survey – Perceptions of Stress

### Perception of Concern for Stress by DSP Sworn Job Title

There are clear differences on the perceived concern of the four groups among troopers, inspectors, and “other” higher-ranking sworn officers.

The troopers feel their peers and the union are most concerned about job-related stress. Conversely, most do not think their immediate supervisors and, especially other DSP management staff, are very concerned about their job related stress.

While almost half of the inspectors (41%) think their peers are concerned about job-related stress, only about one in five think the union and their immediate supervisors are. Only 9% think the other DSP management staff are concerned.

About one-third of the “other,” higher-ranking officers think their peers, their immediate supervisors, and other DSP management staff are concerned. Slightly less, about one in five, think the union is concerned.

The most remarkable aspect of this table is that, compared to the “other” officers, the troopers are much more skeptical of the perceived concern for their job-related stress from their supervisors and other DSP management staff—and so much more positive about the perceived concern of their peers and the union.

<b>PERCEPTION OF CONCERN* FOR JOB-RELATED STRESS</b>				
<b>BY DSP SWORN JOB TITLE</b>				
	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>DSP Sworn Job Title</b>		
		<b>Trooper</b>	<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Other</b>
N =	362	244	66	51
Your Peers	48%	<b>52%</b>	41%	<u>35%</u>
The Union	29%	<b>34%</b>	17%	22%
Other DSP Management Staff (not immediate supervisors)	13%	9%	9%	<b>33%</b>
Immediate Supervisors	22%	<u>20%</u>	21%	<b>35%</b>
Source: Data Tables 62-65				
*Percent “4” and “5” ratings on a 5 point scale (“1”= “Not At All Concerned” & “5” = “Very Concerned”)				

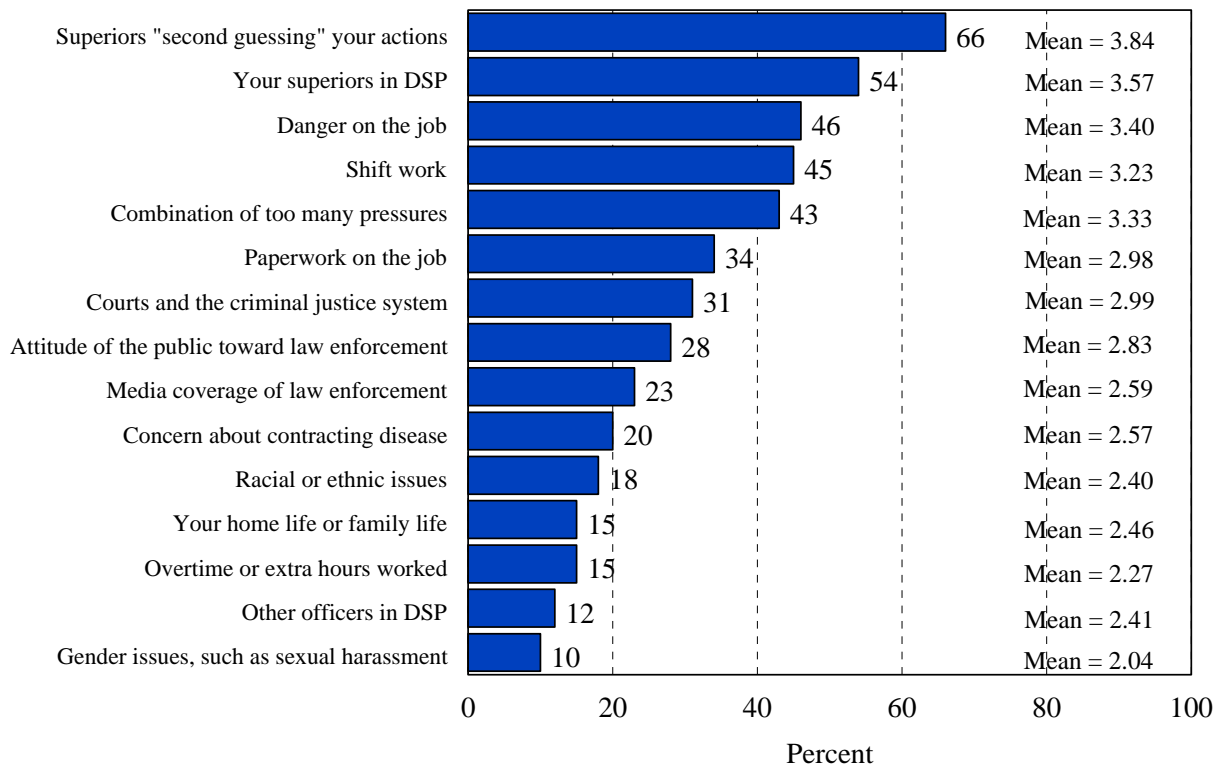


## Section One: Mail Survey – Sources of Stress

### Sources of Job-Related Stress

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of stress caused by 15 sources of job stress. Of the 15 sources of stress studied, the top two sources causing the most stress are related to the actions of superiors in DSP; “superiors ‘second guessing’ your actions” and “your superiors in DSP.” “Danger on the job,” “shift work,” and a “combination of too many pressures” are also top causes of job stress.

**Levels of Stress Caused by Various Sources**



Source: Data Tables 3-17

N = 362

## Section One: Mail Survey – Sources of Stress

### Top Five Sources of Stress by Demographic Group

Looking at the five most often mentioned sources of stress, we see that there are some important differences between the groups.

- Women are more likely than men to rate these sources of stress highly, but not always significantly more likely to do so.
- Officers aged 40–49 are more likely than other officers to rate these sources as highly stressful, especially compared to younger officers.
- Troopers are more likely than other officers to rate “Superiors second guessing your actions” as highly stressful while the higher ranked “other” officers (Sergeant–Colonel) are more likely to mention a “combination of too many pressures.”
- Officers with 10 or more years of experience are more likely to rate these factors as highly stressful than less experienced officers, especially those with less than 5 years on the job.

One similarity is that respondents, regardless of their demographic profile, rate the stress caused by “Danger on the job” similarly.

TOP FIVE SOURCES OF STRESS* BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP					
	Top Five Sources of Job-Related Stress Overall				
	Second Guessing	Superiors In DSP	Danger on The Job	Shift Work	Combo of Pressures
N =	362	362	362	362	362
<b>OVERALL RATINGS*</b>	66%	54%	46%	45%	43%
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	65%	51%	45%	44%	41%
Female	74%	<b>70%</b>	52%	56%	50%
<b>Age</b>					
18 – 29	68%	54%	41%	<u>31%</u>	<u>34%</u>
30 – 39	62%	<u>49%</u>	46%	<b>45%</b>	<u>36%</u>
40 – 49	71%	<b>61%</b>	51%	<b>52%</b>	<b>55%</b>
50 +	61%	44%	39%	47%	42%
<b>Job Title</b>					
Trooper	<b>71%</b>	55%	47%	<b>47%</b>	39%
Inspector	59%	58%	46%	33%	36%
Other (Sgt. - Col.)	<u>53%</u>	43%	45%	<b>53%</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Time as Sworn Officer</b>					
< 5 years	<u>56%</u>	38%	38%	<u>29%</u>	29%
5 - 9 years	64%	<b>58%</b>	40%	46%	27%
10 + years	<b>70%</b>	<b>58%</b>	50%	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Source: Data Tables 3-5, 12, & 17					
*Percent “4” and “5” ratings on a 5 point scale (“1”= “Not At All Stressful” & “5” = “Very Stressful”)					

## Section One: Mail Survey – Sources of Stress

### Highest Rated Source of Job-Related Stress by Demographic Group

Members of all the demographic groups in the survey, except the “other” supervisory and managerial officers, mention “second guessing” as a high source of stress more than any other source. The “other” officers mention a “combination of too many pressures” and “paperwork on the job” more than any other sources.

<b>HIGHEST RATED SOURCE OF STRESS BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP</b>		
	<b>Highest Rated Source of Stress</b>	<b>Percent “4” and “5” Ratings</b>
	N =	362
<b>OVERALL</b>	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	66%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	65%
Female	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	74%
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 29	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	68%
30 – 39	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	62%
40 – 49	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	71%
50 +	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	61%
<b>Job Title</b>		
Trooper	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	71%
Inspector	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	59%
Other Titles (Sergeant – Colonel)	Combination of too many pressures	67%
	Paperwork on the job	67%
<b>Time as Sworn Officer</b>		
< 5 years	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	56%
5 - 9 years	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	64%
10 + years	Superiors “second guessing” your actions	70%
Source: Data Tables 3-17		

## Section One: Mail Survey – Sources of Stress

### Sources of Job-Related Stress by DSP Sworn Job Title

Looking further into the differences by job title, it appears troopers, inspectors, and “other” high ranking officers have different sources of stress. The largest differences are:

- Troopers are more affected than other officers are by superiors “second guessing” their actions.
- “Other” high-ranking respondents are more affected than troopers and inspectors by the combination of too many pressures and other officers in DSP.
- Both troopers and “other” officers are more concerned than inspectors about paperwork on the job and shift work. However, it must be noted that inspectors are typically assigned to daytime shifts, but occasionally, they may be asked to work a schedule other than their normal schedule at the discretion of their supervisor.

<p align="center"><b>SOURCES OF STRESS*</b></p> <p align="center"><b>BY DSP SWORN JOB TITLE</b></p>				
	Total Sample	DSP Sworn Job Title		
		Trooper	Inspector	Other
N =	362	244	66	51
Superiors “second guessing” your actions	66%	<b>71%</b>	59%	<u>53%</u>
Your superiors in DSP	54%	55%	58%	43%
Danger on the job	46%	47%	46%	45%
Shift work	45%	<b>47%</b>	33%	<b>53%</b>
Combination of too many pressures	43%	40%	36%	<b>67%</b>
Paperwork on the job	34%	<b>31%</b>	18%	<b>67%</b>
Courts and the criminal justice system	31%	<b>35%</b>	24%	<u>20%</u>
Attitude of the public toward law enforcement	28%	28%	26%	33%
Media coverage of law enforcement	23%	<b>23%</b>	12%	<b>33%</b>
Concern about contracting disease, such as HIV/AIDS	20%	19%	26%	16%
Racial or ethnic issues	18%	20%	17%	12%
Your home life or family life	15%	15%	14%	16%
Overtime/extra hours worked	15%	12%	6%	<b>39%</b>
Other officers in DSP	12%	10%	5%	<b>28%</b>
Gender issues, such as sexual harassment	10%	<b>11%</b>	<u>3%</u>	12%
Source: Data Tables 3-17				
*Percent “4” and “5” ratings on a 5 point scale (“1”= “Not At All Stressful” & “5” = “Very Stressful”)				

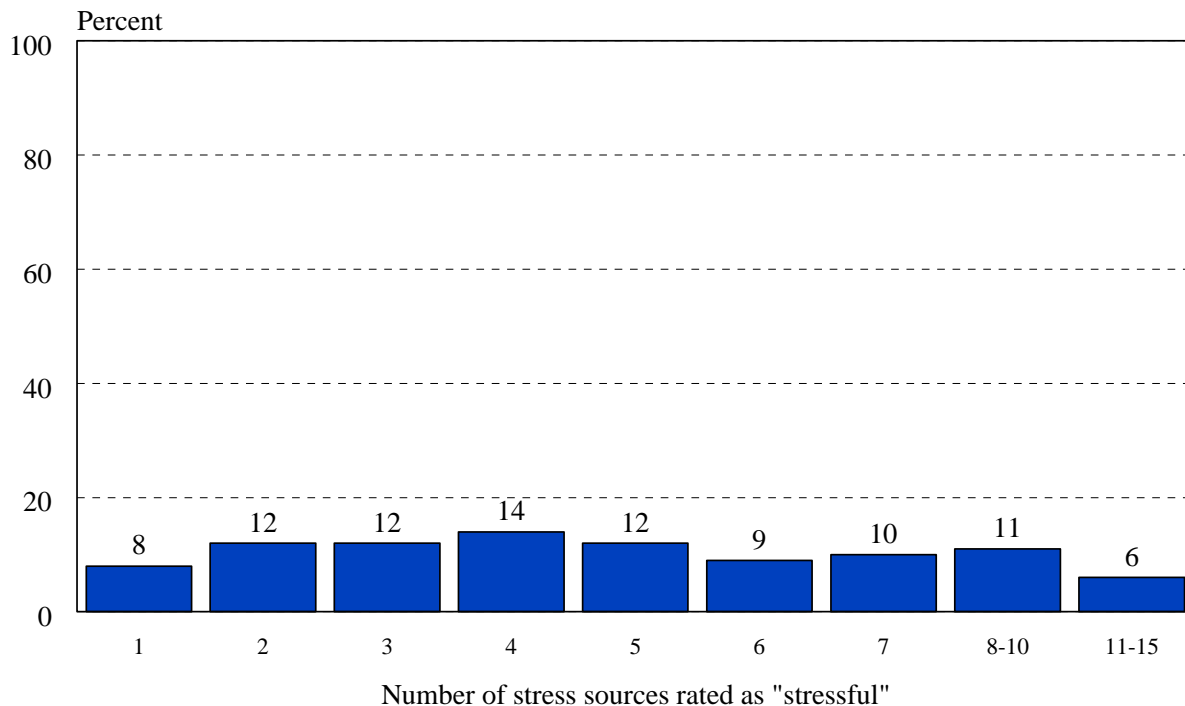
## Section One: Mail Survey – Sources of Stress

### Number of Job-Related Stress Sources Mentioned

In order to determine the number of stress factors that sworn personnel routinely face in their job, the number of respondents rating any stress factor using a “4” or a “5” was tabulated.

In general, all respondents gave a “4” or “5” rating to at least one source of stress and one respondent did so for all 15 sources. Overall, respondents rated an average of 4.59 sources of stress as highly stressful.

### Number of Job-Related Stress Sources Mentioned



Source: Data Table 18  
N = 362

## Section One: Mail Survey – Sources of Stress

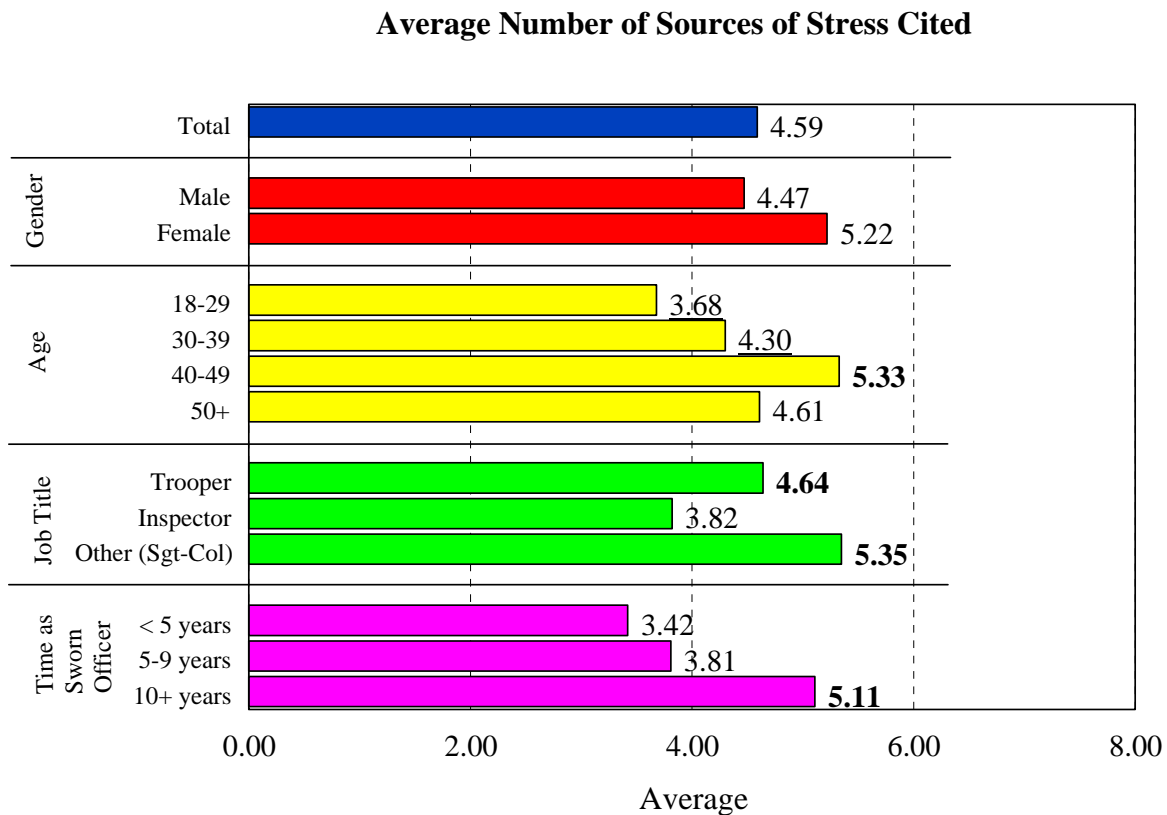
### Sources of Job-Related Stress by Demographic Group

Three groups of officers cite, on the average, more sources (more than five) of stress than the other respondents do. They are:

- Officers aged 40 – 49
- “Other,” higher ranking officers
- Officers with ten or more years of experience

The respondents who name the fewest average number of sources (fewer than four) are:

- Officers aged 18-29
- Inspectors
- Officers with fewer than ten years of experience



Source: Data Table 18  
N = 362

## Section One: Mail Survey – Stress Producing Events

### Incidence of Stress Producing Events in the Last Five Years

The most frequently mentioned events that may increase sworn personnel stress are seeing victims killed/badly injured (90% experiencing), having a near miss (76%) and being second guessed unfairly (67%). Once again, being second guessed comes forward as causing stress to law enforcement personnel.

The high incidence of many of these stress-producing events points to the previous finding that older and more experienced officers have higher levels of stress than younger and less experienced ones. One can logically draw the conclusion that they simply have had more time to encounter these stress-producing events.

**Incidence of Stress-Producing Events**



## Section One: Mail Survey – Stress Producing Events

### Incidence of Stress Producing Events – By Level of Job-Related Stress and Utilization of Professional Counseling Services

Officers who assess their job-related stress level as high (using a “4” or “5” rating) are more likely to have experienced most of the events studied than those respondents reporting a lower stress level, with most of the percentage differences between the two groups being statistically significant.

Respondents who talked with professional counselors are also more likely to have experienced each of the 10 events than those who have not received counseling, with again, most of the differences being statistically significant.

In all cases, those who are highly stressed and those who have talked with professional counselors are more likely to have experienced each event—and have the largest average number of stress-producing events. For example, 94% of the highly stressed respondents have seen victims who were killed or badly injured, while significantly less (85%) of the less stressed respondents said they have experienced this stress producing event. And, highly stressed respondents experienced about five stress producing events while those with lower levels of stress have experienced about four events.

Based on the survey data, it appears respondents wait to get counseling until after they have become highly stressed and have experienced many stressful events.

<b>INCIDENCE OF STRESS-PRODUCING EVENTS</b> <b>BY LEVEL OF JOB STRESS</b> <b>AND UTILIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING SERVICES</b>					
Type of Experience	Total Sample	Percent Experiencing			
		Level of Job-Related Stress		Talked With Professional Counselor	
		High*	Low**	Yes	No
N =	362	185	171	64	298
Seen victims who were killed/badly injured	90%	<b>94%</b>	85%	<b>97%</b>	88%
Had a near-miss in the line of duty	76%	<b>83%</b>	68%	<b>98%</b>	72%
Been “second guessed” unfairly about what you did	67%	<b>80%</b>	53%	<b>83%</b>	64%
Attended a funeral of any law enforcement officer killed in the line of duty	49%	<b>56%</b>	42%	<b>64%</b>	46%
Seen officer injured in the line of duty	45%	<b>54%</b>	34%	<b>64%</b>	41%
Been injured in the line of duty	44%	<b>56%</b>	30%	<b>69%</b>	38%
Know DSP officer killed in the line of duty	32%	<b>37%</b>	26%	<b>47%</b>	29%
Know officer who committed suicide	11%	<b>14%</b>	6%	<b>22%</b>	8%
Seen officer killed in the line of duty	4%	3%	4%	8%	3%
Killed a suspect in the line of duty	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%
<b>Average number of events</b>	4.17	<b>4.76</b>	3.48	<b>5.45</b>	3.89
Source: Data Tables 19-29					
*Percent “4” and “5” ratings on a 5 point scale (“1”= “Not At All Stressful” & “5” = “Very Stressful”)					
**Percent “1”, “2”, and “3” ratings on same 5 point scale					



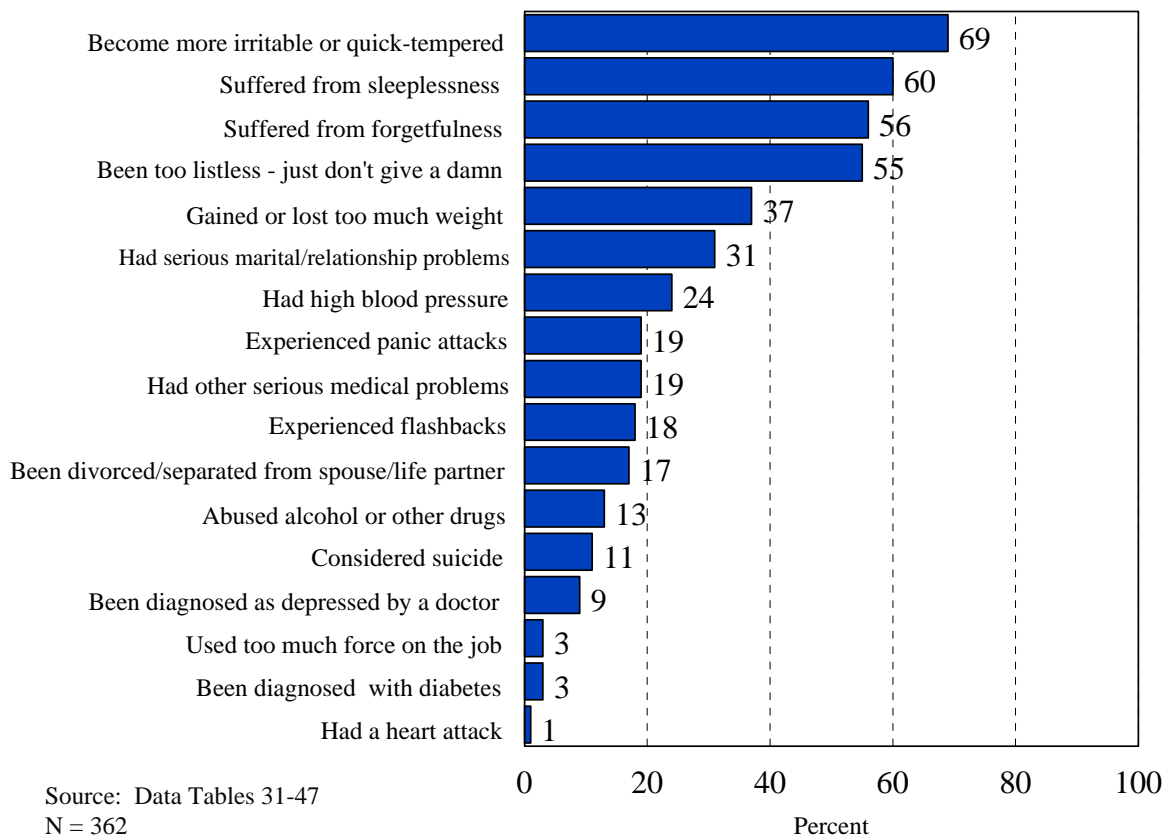
## Section One: Mail Survey – Consequences of Stress

### Personal Experiences in the Last Five Years That May/May Not be Related to Stress

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they have experienced a list of situations regardless of whether or not they attribute it to stress.

Overall, more than half of the respondents said they have become more irritable or quick-tempered (69%), suffered from sleeplessness (60%) or forgetfulness (56%) or have become listless (55%).

#### Personal Experiences That May or May Not be Related to Stress



## Section One: Mail Survey – Consequences of Stress

### Personal Experiences by Level of Job Stress and Utilization of Professional Counseling Services

Overall, highly stressed respondents are more likely to have experienced almost all of the 17 consequences of stress studied compared to the lower stressed respondents. In fact, highly stressed respondents were significantly more likely to have experienced 13 of the 17 events studied.

Those who have spoken with a professional counselor are also more likely to have experienced each of the 17 consequences of stress, with again 13 of the differences significantly different than those who have not sought counseling.

<b>PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT BE RELATED TO STRESS</b>  <b>BY LEVEL OF JOB STRESS AND UTILIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING SERVICES</b>					
Personal Experience	Percent Experiencing				
	Total Sample	Level of Job-Related Stress		Talked With Professional Counselor	
		High**	Low*	Yes	No
N =	362	185	171	64	298
More irritable or quick tempered	69%	<b>82%</b>	55%	<b>84%</b>	66%
Suffered from sleeplessness	60%	<b>74%</b>	46%	<b>77%</b>	57%
Suffered from forgetfulness	56%	<b>70%</b>	42%	<b>77%</b>	52%
Too listless – just don't give a damn	55%	<b>64%</b>	46%	<b>77%</b>	50%
Gained or lost too much weight	37%	<b>49%</b>	22%	<b>58%</b>	33%
Had serious marital or relationship problems without getting divorced or separated	31%	<b>36%</b>	26%	<b>55%</b>	26%
Had high blood pressure	24%	<b>31%</b>	17%	31%	23%
Had other serious medical problems	19%	<b>25%</b>	12%	<b>36%</b>	16%
Experienced panic attacks	19%	<b>26%</b>	11%	<b>38%</b>	14%
Experienced flashbacks	18%	<b>24%</b>	12%	<b>41%</b>	13%
Been divorced or separated from your spouse or life partner	17%	19%	15%	<b>38%</b>	12%
Abused alcohol/other drugs	13%	16%	9%	<b>25%</b>	10%
Considered suicide	11%	<b>15%</b>	6%	<b>30%</b>	6%
Diagnosed as depressed by a doctor	9%	<b>12%</b>	6%	<b>30%</b>	5%
Been diagnosed with Diabetes	3%	2%	5%	6%	2%
Used too much force on the job	3%	<b>5%</b>	1%	6%	2%
Had a heart attack	1%	1%	1%	3%	--
Source: Data Tables 31-47					
*Percent "4" and "5" ratings on a 5 point scale ("1"= "Not At All Stressful" & "5" = "Very Stressful")					
**Percent "1", "2", and "3" ratings on same 5 point scale					

## Section One: Mail Survey – Consequences of Stress

### Annual Hours Used for Sick, Disability, and Medical Leave of Absence by Level of Job Stress and Utilization of Professional Counseling Services

The table below shows the hours used for sick, disability, and medical leave of absence within the last 12 months. Respondents with a high level of job-related stress are significantly more likely to take more time off for sick leave (26.74 hours) and disability leave (18.81) than less stressed respondents (19.22 and 0.36 hours, respectively).

Similarly, those respondents who have talked with a professional counselor (shown previously to be more stressed) are also significantly more likely to take time off for these reasons, as well as medical leave of absence, than those who have not talked with a professional counselor.

<b>HOURS USED FOR LEAVE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY LEVEL OF JOB STRESS AND UTILIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING SERVICES</b>					
Hours Used	Total Sample	Level of Job-Related Stress		Talked With Professional Counselor	
		High*	Low**	Yes	No
N =	362	185	171	64	298
<b>Hours for Sick Leave</b>					
None	24%	20%	28%	8%	<b>27%</b>
< 8 hours	3%	2%	5%	3%	3%
8 - 12 hours	16%	16%	15%	14%	16%
13 - 16 hours	14%	13%	14%	8%	15%
17 - 24 hours	18%	18%	18%	25%	16%
25 - 40 hours	15%	15%	14%	19%	14%
41 or more hours	11%	14%	7%	20%	8%
No answer	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%
<u>Average Hours</u>	23.06	<b>26.74</b>	19.22	<b>41.00</b>	19.28
<b>Hours for Disability Leave</b>					
None	74%	70%	78%	58%	<b>78%</b>
< 8 hours	1%	1%	1%	*	1%
8 – 40 hours	3%	4%	1%	8%	2%
41 or more hours	2%	3%	--	5%	1%
No answer	21%	22%	20%	30%	19%
<u>Average Hours</u>	9.61	<b>18.81</b>	0.36	<b>30.33</b>	5.76
<b>Hours for Medical Leave of Absence</b>					
None	72%	72%	73%	56%	<b>76%</b>
< 8 hours	1%	--	2%	3%	1%
8 - 40 hours	2%	1%	2%	5%	1%
41 or more hours	5%	5%	5%	8%	5%
No answer	20%	22%	18%	28%	18%
<u>Average Hours</u>	27.94	<b>36.72</b>	19.91	<b>77.37</b>	18.66
Source: Data Tables 49-51					
*Less than 0.5%					
*Percent “4” and “5” ratings on a 5 point scale (“1”= “Not At All Stressful” & “5” = “Very Stressful”)					
**Percent “1”, “2”, and “3” ratings on same 5 point scale					

## Section One: Mail Survey – Consequences of Stress

### Hours Used for Leave by DSP Sworn Job Title

As uncovered previously, higher ranking personnel have a higher level of job stress; however they take off fewer hours for sick leave, disability leave, and medical leave than respondents in other title categories.

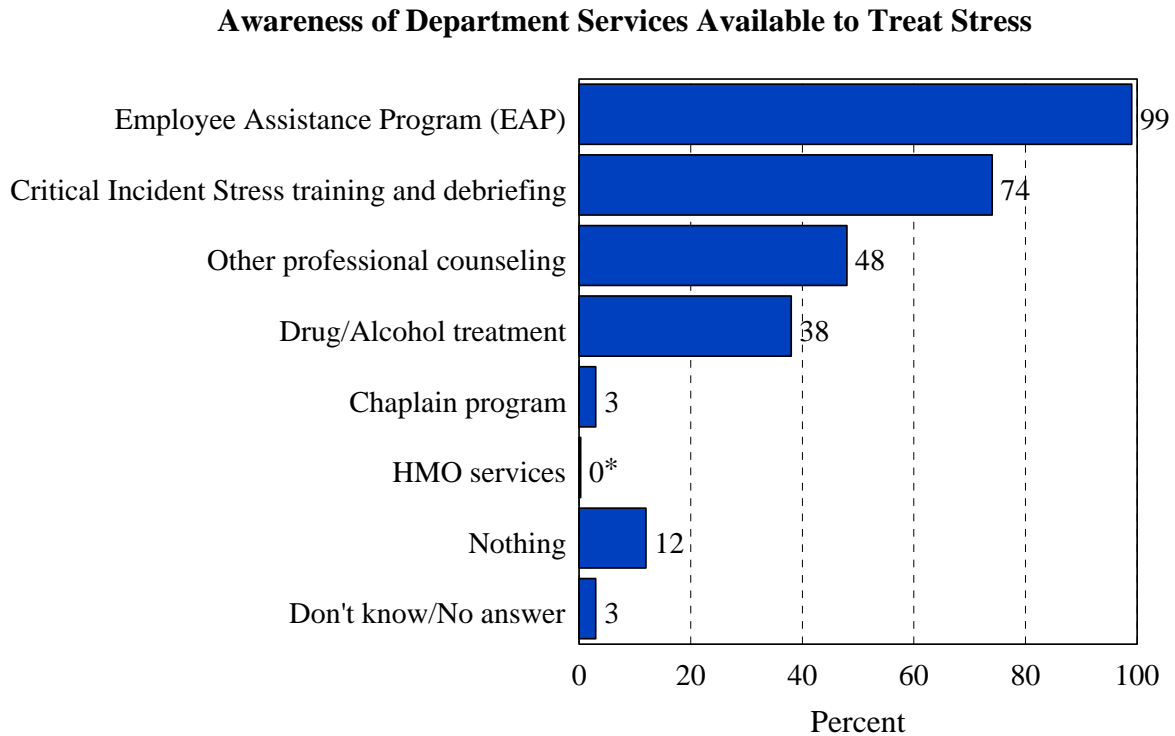
But, unfortunately, these results are not reliable since other higher ranking personnel have the option of using flex time (which is not collected in this study).

<b>HOURS FOR LEAVE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY JOB TITLE</b>				
<b>Hours</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>DSP Sworn Job Title</b>		
		<b>Trooper</b>	<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Other</b>
N =	362	244	66	51
<b>Hours for Sick Leave</b>				
None	24%	18%	23%	<b>53%</b>
< 8 hours	3%	3%	5%	2%
8 - 12 hours	16%	16%	12%	16%
13 - 16 hours	14%	15%	11%	12%
17 - 24 hours	18%	19%	20%	10%
25 - 40 hours	15%	18%	10%	6%
41 or more hours	11%	10%	18%	2%
No answer	2%	1%	3%	--
Average	23.06	<b>25.24</b>	<b>26.06</b>	8.96
<b>Hours for Disability Leave</b>				
None	74%	72%	70%	<b>90%</b>
< 8 hours	1%	*	2%	--
8 - 40 hours	3%	4%	--	--
41 or more hours	2%	2%	2%	--
No answer	21%	21%	27%	10%
Average	9.61	13.58	3.15	--
<b>Hours for Medical Leave of Absence</b>				
None	72%	71%	62%	<b>90%</b>
< 8 hours	1%	1%	3%	--
8 - 40 hours	2%	2%	3%	--
41 or more hours	5%	5%	8%	2%
No answer	20%	21%	24%	8%
Average	27.94	24.69	64.90	2.55
Source: Data Tables 49-51				
*Less than 0.5%.				

## Section One: Mail Survey – Response to Stress

### Awareness of Department Services to Treat Stress

The overwhelming proportion of officers know of services available to treat stress in the department. Virtually all (99%) said they know of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and about three-fourths (74%) are aware of Critical Incident Stress training and debriefing. In addition, half (48%) know that other professional counseling is available, and over one-third (38%) know of drug and alcohol treatment. Only 15% say that “nothing” is available or that they “do not know” what is available.



Source: Data Table 52

N = 362

\*Less than 0.5%.

## Section One: Mail Survey – Response to Stress

### Actions Taken to Reduce Job-Related Stress by Level of Job Stress and Utilization of Professional Counseling Services

In regard to what respondents do about job-related stress, most officers talk informally with friends (76%), talk with their families (69%), and talk with friends outside the department (54%). Only a few talk with a non-EAP professional (15%) or an EAP counselor (5%).

Officers with higher levels of stress usually do more things to combat stress, although the differences are typically not significant. Those who have talked with professional counselors do more things about stress, especially talking with other officers or friends outside the department.

In terms of demographic comparison, younger officers tend to talk informally with other officers or family, while older officers are more likely to seek professional counseling. This same trend holds true for time on the job. Those with less experience (less than five years) on the job are more likely to talk with other officers than respondents with more experience, who, conversely, are more likely to seek professional counseling.

Generally, the EAP counselors are not used very often (5%). However, the national average for EAP utilization is only 6%, according to the Employee Assistance Professional Association

<b>WHAT RESPONDENTS HAVE DONE ABOUT JOB-RELATED STRESS BY LEVEL OF JOB STRESS AND UTILIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING SERVICES</b>					
Action Taken	Total Sample	Percent Taking Each Action			
		Level of Job-Related Stress		Talked with Professional Counselor	
		High*	Low**	Yes	No
N =	362	185	171	64	298
Talked informally to other officers	76%	76%	76%	88%	73%
Talked with family	69%	71%	68%	78%	67%
Talked with friends outside the dept.	54%	57%	52%	81%	49%
Talked with another (non-EAP) professional counselor	15%	20%	9%	83%	--
Talked with an EAP counselor	5%	6%	4%	27%	--
Exercise/physical fitness	4%	4%	5%	--	5%
Prayer/Minister	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Critical Incident Stress Debriefing	1%	--	1%	--	1%
Talked to supervisor	1%	2%	1%	2%	*
Nothing	11%	11%	12%	--	14%
No answer	1%	--	1%	--	1%
Source: Data Table 53					
*Less than 0.5%					
*Percent “4” and “5” ratings on a 5 point scale (“1”= “Not At All Stressful” & “5” = “Very Stressful”)					
**Percent “1”, “2”, and “3” ratings on same 5 point scale					

## ***Section One: Mail Survey – Response to Stress***

### **Number and Type of EAP Consults in 1998-2000<sup>3</sup>**

WISDOT EAP provided the total number and type of EAP consults in 1998 to 2000 for the database analysis. Aggregate figures for the entire DSP were provided, separated by supervisors and employees, without any identification of individuals. That information is summarized here, but because of potential compromise of confidentiality, specific data are not shown in tabular form.

In that data, the employee “problem areas” are more often concerning supervisor conflicts and work related stress. However, employees also consulted EAP for such things as alcohol use by either themselves or other people, emotional problems (themselves or other people), and family problems..

Supervisor “problem areas” are generally related to consultation with EAP about employee job performance problems or work unit issues. There were a few consults regarding emotional or drug/alcohol problems, but always regarding other persons.. When a supervisor consults with EAP about his or her own personal or professional problems, that consultation is captured under and included in the “Employee problem area” data.

Consistent with the mail survey results, this information shows that people with different job titles have different types of job-related stress and that subordinates’ stress is often due to supervisors.

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<sup>3</sup> This information was derived during the database analysis phase. Respondents in the mail study were not asked to specify the reason for seeking assistance from EAP.

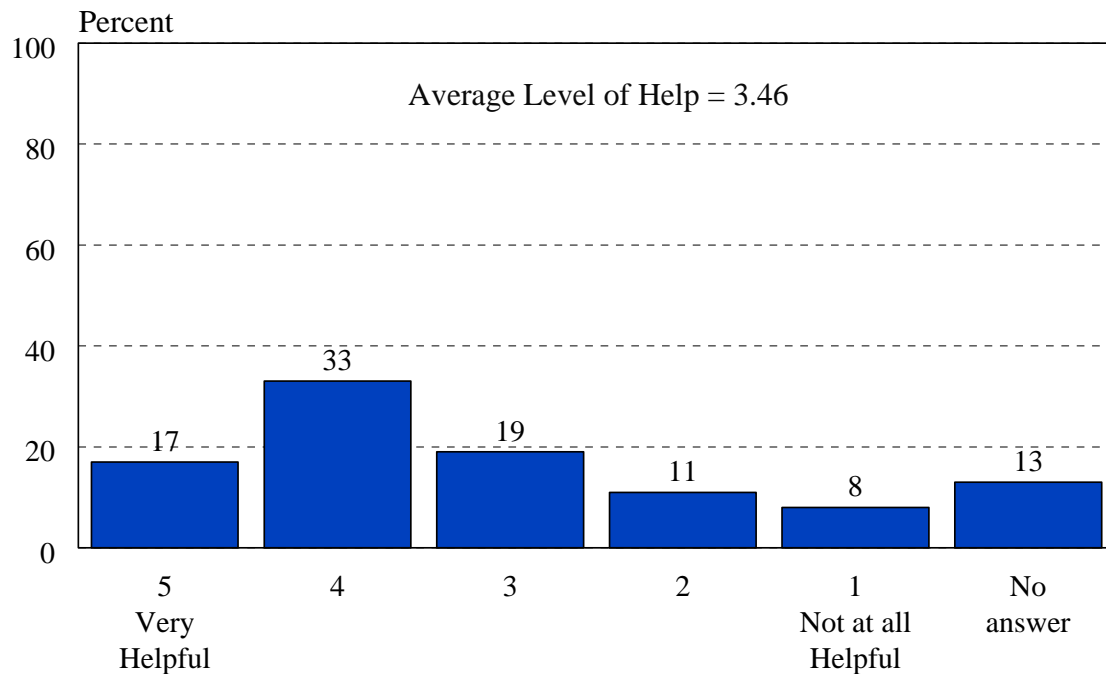
## Section One: Mail Survey – Evaluation of Counseling Sources

### Helpfulness of EAP and Other Professional Counseling – Users Only

Officers who have seen professional counselors were asked to evaluate the helpfulness of those counselors. Generally, the respondents are moderately satisfied. Half gave a high usefulness rating of “5” (17%) or “4” (33%). Only 19% gave the lowest ratings of “1” or “2.”

The average helpfulness rating is 3.46 on a scale which 5.00 is the highest.

#### Evaluation of Helpfulness of EAP or Other Professional Counselors



Source: Data Table 54  
N = 64



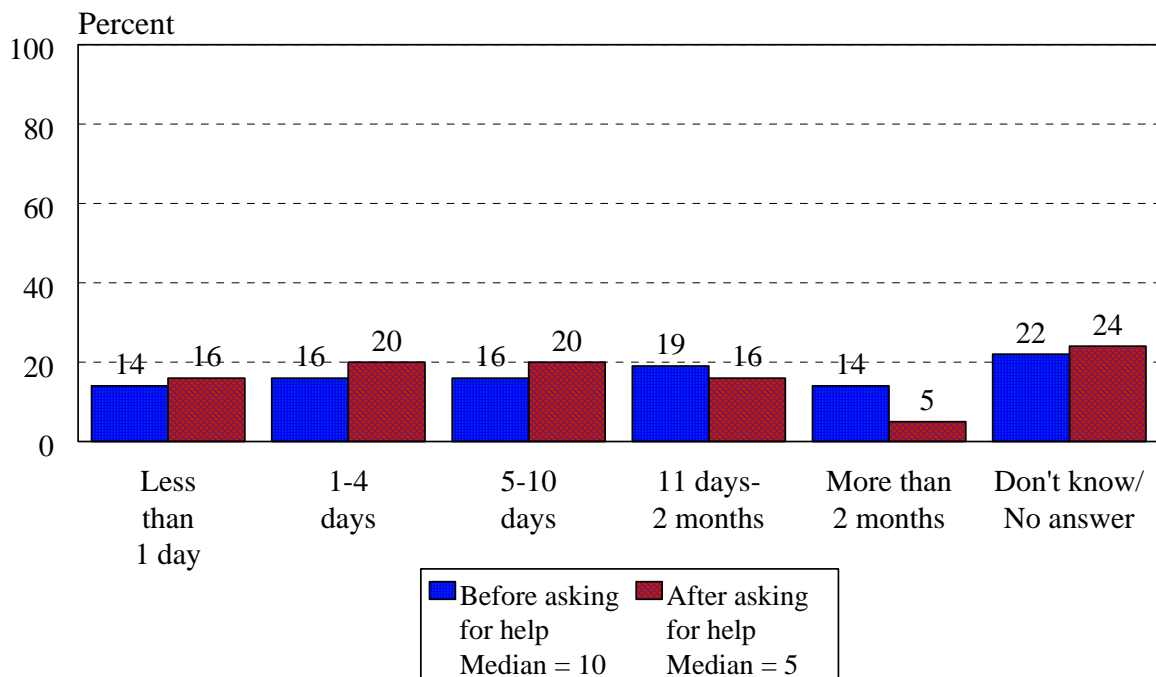
## Section One: Mail Survey – Evaluation of Counseling Sources

### Time Spent Waiting Before/After Asking for Help

Respondents who have seen either an EAP or other professional counselor were asked how long they waited before asking for help. They were also asked how long they had to wait to see an EAP counselor or other professional counselor after asking for help. The times range considerably, from less than one day to more than two months. Half of the respondents waited 10 days or less before they asked for help. In terms of the time spent waiting for a meeting with a counselor, half of the respondents reported having to wait five days.

Some respondents waited an extremely long time before asking for help; one reported waiting 900 days and one waited four years.

### Time Waiting Before/After Asking for Help



Source: Data Tables 55-56  
N = 64

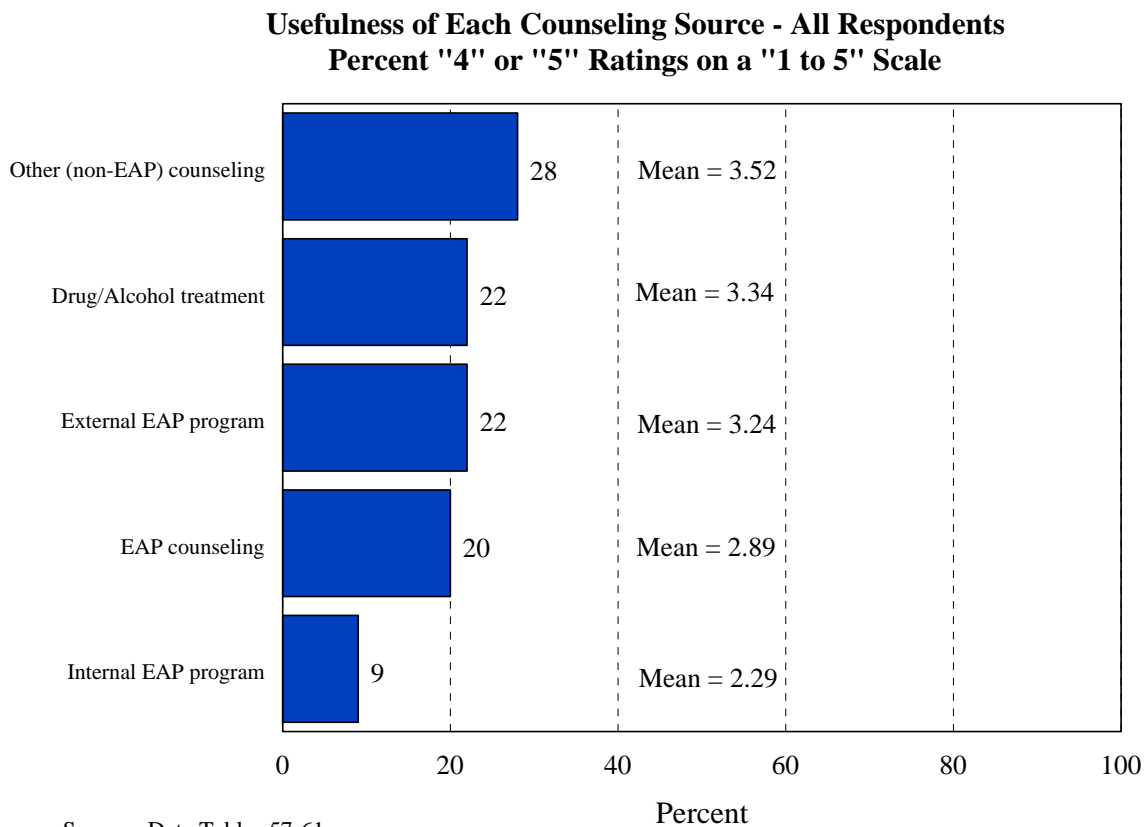
The median waiting time before asking for help is 10 days, with a median of a five day wait before actually getting in to see an EAP or other professional counselor. However, this study did not collect specific waiting times by type of counselor used. It is unknown how long respondents waited to see an EAP counselor specifically compared to the time spent waiting to see other professional counselors.

## Section One: Mail Survey – Evaluation of Counseling Sources

### Usefulness of Counseling Sources – All Respondents

All respondents, whether they used a counseling service or not, were asked to assess the usefulness of five counseling sources on a “1 to 5” scale. Fewer than one-third of the respondents gave each of the sources high “4” or “5” ratings. Non-EAP counseling received the most “4” or “5” ratings (28%), while the internal EAP program received the fewest (9%).

One officer in five (20%) gave EAP counseling a high “4” or “5” rating.



Source: Data Tables 57-61  
N = 362

## Section One: Mail Survey – Evaluation of Counseling Sources

### Usefulness of Counseling Sources by Utilization of Professional Counseling Services

This table shows the usefulness ratings for EAP and non-EAP counseling overall and by those who have or have not talked with a professional counselor (EAP or other).

In terms of the usefulness of EAP counseling, the respondents who have used professional counseling gave EAP counseling a larger percentage of high usefulness ratings (26% “4” and “5” ratings) than the other respondents did (18%). However, the overall usefulness rating of EAP counseling by counseling users was almost equal to that of the non-users (2.82 v. 2.91).

Officers who have used professional counseling services rate non-EAP counseling much higher than they rate EAP counseling; 53% give “4” or “5” ratings to non-EAP counseling compared to 26% who give these high ratings to EAP counseling.

Interestingly, users of professional counseling services rate the usefulness of non-EAP counseling higher than EAP counseling (4.09 v. 2.82).

USEFULNESS OF EACH COUNSELING SOURCE BY UTILIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING SERVICES			
Service	Total Sample	Talked with Professional Counselor	
		Yes	No
N =	362	64	298
<b>EAP Counseling</b>			
5 Very Useful	8%	13%	7%
4	12%	13%	11%
3	17%	5%	<b>19%</b>
2	11%	11%	11%
1 Not at all Useful	12%	19%	10%
No opinion	33%	31%	33%
No answer	8%	9%	7%
Average Usefulness Rating	2.89	2.82	2.91
<b>Other (non-EAP) Counseling</b>			
5 Very Useful	14%	<b>31%</b>	10%
4	14%	22%	12%
3	17%	17%	17%
2	7%	2%	<b>8%</b>
1 Not at all Useful	3%	2%	3%
No opinion	37%	14%	<b>41%</b>
No answer	8%	13%	7%
Average Usefulness Rating	3.52	<b>4.09</b>	3.35
Source: Data Tables 57 and 61			

## Section One: Mail Survey – Respondent Comments and Suggestions

### Elective Comments and Suggestions

Of those who decided to write in comments at the end of the questionnaire, there are some clear patterns. Troopers are most likely to claim that the DSP management is not understanding or supporting of employee problems and to say the management causes or creates stress.

The “other,” higher-ranking respondents were more likely to say that stress is part of the job and that they deal with it. However, almost as many also said that the management is not understanding or supportive of employee problems and that they have heavy work loads.

The table below presents the percentage of responses based on the total answering the question (N=135) and the total responding to the questionnaire (N=362). Readers are cautioned to use the percents based on the total sample, since the percents based on the total answering are misleading in that it may overemphasize the results.

<b>COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS BY JOB TITLE</b>					
	<b>Total Answering</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Job Title</b>		
			<b>Trooper</b>	<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Other</b>
N =	135	362	244	66	51
Management is not understanding/ supportive of employee problems	21%	8%	<b>10%</b>	<u>2%</u>	6%
Management causes/creates stress (miscellaneous)	16%	6%	7%	8%	2%
We are over-worked/heavy workload	10%	4%	4%	3%	6%
Stress is part of the job/I deal with it	7%	3%	2%	2%	8%
Stress is caused by the job - general	7%	3%	3%	--	4%
Source: Data Table 70 & 70a					
Only comments written by 10 or more respondents are included in this table.					

## Section One: Mail Survey – Respondent Profile

### Respondent Demographics by Level of Job-Related Stress and Usage of Professional Counseling

Overall, a large majority of study respondents are men (85%). All ages, from 18 to 59 years, are represented; no respondents are more than 59 years old. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents are troopers, and about two-thirds have worked as sworn officers for 10 years or more. As shown in the Introduction, the questionnaire respondents are representative of all DSP sworn personnel.

PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS	
	Total Sample
N =	362
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	85%
Female	15%
<b>Age</b>	
18 - 24	4%
25 - 29	12%
30 - 39	39%
40 - 49	35%
50 - 59	10%
60 or above	--
<b>Job Title</b>	
Trooper	67%
Inspector	18%
Other (Sgt. – Col.)	14%
<b>Years Worked as Sworn Officer (in any department)</b>	
Less than 5 years	20%
5 to 9 years	14%
10 years or more	66%
Source: Data Tables 66-69	

# **DETAILED FINDINGS SECTION II**

## **DATABASE ANALYSIS**

## ***Section Two: Database Analysis – Introduction***

### **Research Objectives**

Step 1 of this study includes a phase to analyze internal WisDOT data. The objective of this phase is to examine if there is a correlation between DSP levels of work stress and the following hypothesized consequences of stress:

- Hire/retention rate for law enforcement personnel
- Usage of sick leave and injury leave
- Employee absences and/or work productivity decline
- Number of worker's compensation filings
- Number of grievance filings and disciplinary proceedings
- Number of EAP stress-related consultations

In order to maintain anonymity of mail study respondents, the responses from the mail study and the WisDOT database cannot be combined, thus individual levels of stress from the mail study and their relation to the hypothesized consequences of stress studied in the database analysis cannot be determined. It is statistically unreliable to say for certain if DSP sworn personnel, in fact, have a higher incidence of the consequences of stress than other WisDOT employees based on the information available for the database analysis.

### **Methodology**

In order to examine/analyze the WisDOT database, the WisDOT provided several key databases and/or reports.

- WisDOT employee demographic information (including title, age, marital status, gender, race, years of service, and employee group) for 1996 through 2000
- Injury Time and Incidents for 1996 through 2000
- Sick Time and Incidents for 1996 through 2000
- Employee Grievances for 1995 through 2000
- Disciplinary Actions for 1995 through 2000
- DSP Fleet accidents for 1996 through 2000
- Worker's Compensation Claims for 1994 through 2000
- Termination Incidents for 1996 through 2000
- EAP Initial Consultation Reports (Employee & Supervisor) for 1998-2000\*

\*Only two years of EAP Initial Consults were analyzed due to the incompatibility of EAP reports from previous years.

## Section Two: Database Analysis – Introduction

The demographic, injury time, and sick time databases were merged into one database, with individual records matched by each employee's position number. In order to merge these files accurately, duplicate position numbers, regardless of class code or employee birth date, were deleted. Overall, a proportionately low number of records were deleted in each WisDOT group (A-DSP sworn personnel, B-DSP unsworn personnel, or C-non DSP personnel).

The Employee Grievances, Disciplinary Actions, DSP Fleet Accidents, Worker's Compensation Claim Summary, Termination Incidents, and EAP Consultation Report were tabulated and summarized individually.

### Average Number of Employees by Type of WisDOT Personnel

When needed during the database analysis, the average number of employees is used in calculations. The table below shows the actual number of employees within each WisDOT category from 1996 to 2000. On average, there are 472 DSP sworn personnel, representing 13% of the entire WisDOT workforce. DSP unsworn average 159 employees or 4% of the WisDOT workforce. Non-DSP personnel average 3,120 employees, or 83% of the WisDOT workforce.

<b>AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES</b>				
<b>1996 to 2000</b>				
<b>Data Year</b>	<b>Total WisDOT Personnel</b>	<b>Type of WisDOT Personnel</b>		
		<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
		<b>DSP Sworn</b>	<b>DSP Unsworn</b>	<b>Non-DSP</b>
1996	3,730	434	160	3,136
1997	3,787	486	154	3,147
1998	3,707	485	152	3,070
1999	3,745	483	166	3,096
2000	3,784	472	163	3,149
<b>Five Year Average</b>	3,751	472	159	3,120
<b>Percent of WisDOT Personnel</b>	100%	13%	4%	83%



## Section Two: Database Analysis – Sick Leave Analysis

### Annual Sick Leave by Type of WisDOT Personnel and DSP Sworn Job Title

The database analysis of the annual sick time data for all WisDOT employees, including sworn, unsworn and non-DSP employees show the results for sworn personnel were consistent with the findings of the mail study. In 2000, the database median number of sick hours taken by sworn personnel was 22 hours, consistent with the mail study findings of 23 hours. (The median is used as the measure of central tendency for the database analysis due to its ability to exclude extraneous, or atypically high or low, values.)

Comparing the 2000 average sick leave for DSP sworn, DSP unsworn, and non-DSP employees, DSP personnel take less time off for sickness, annually, compared to non-DSP personnel. In fact, non-DSP personnel took time off for sick leave three times as often as DSP sworn personnel, with non-DSP personnel taking an average of three sick time incidents per year while DSP sworn average 1 incident per year.

In terms of hours taken by an average employee, non-DSP employees also take off more hours than DSP personnel. DSP sworn personnel took off a median of 22 hours for sick time, non-sworn took 29 hours compared to 36 hours for non-DSP personnel.

Also consistent with the mail study, the database analysis indicates that higher ranking officers take off less sick time annually than troopers and inspectors. In 2000, troopers took off a median of 24 hours of sick leave, inspectors took 31 hours, while the higher ranking personnel took only six hours. This trend is consistent since 1997.

However, based on information from WisDOT, higher ranking officers have the ability to use flex time for time off, while troopers and inspectors do not have this option and use sick leave. The actual amount of flex time used by higher ranking officials is not collected or recorded, thus the impact of its influence on usage of sick leave is unknown.

ANNUAL SICK LEAVE			
YEAR 2000			
	N =	Median Sick Leave Incidents Per Employee	Median Sick Leave Hours Per Employee
<b>WisDOT Group</b>			
A – DSP Sworn	472	1.00	22.50
B – DSP Unsworn	163	2.00	29.00
C – Non-DSP	3,149	3.00	36.00
<b>DSP Sworn Job Title</b>			
Trooper	303	2.00	24.00
Inspector	91	2.00	31.00
Other	78	1.00	5.50

## Section Two: Database Analysis – Injury Analysis

### Worker's Compensation Claims by DSP Versus Non-DSP Personnel

According to the WisDOT Worker's Compensation Claims from 1994 to 2000, there were 3,015 claims during this seven year period, averaging 431 per year.

Separating the Worker's Compensation claims of the DSP personnel and non-DSP personnel show that there were 1,351 DSP claims from 1994 to 2000, averaging 193 DSP Worker's Compensation claims per year. There were a total of 1,664 non-DSP claims in this same period or an average of 238 claims per year.

Proving that DSP occupations are different, being more hazardous than non-DSP jobs, a large proportion of the total worker's compensation claims were submitted by DSP personnel, the smallest proportion of the WisDOT workforce. Specifically, DSP personnel account for 45% of all Worker's Compensation claims, yet only account for 17% of the total WisDOT staff.

<b>WORKER'S COMPENSATION CLAIMS 1994 to 2000</b>					
<b>WisDOT Personnel Type</b>	<b>Total Number of WisDOT Claims (1994-2000)</b>	<b>Average Yearly Claims</b>	<b>Percent of Claims</b>	<b>Average Number of Employees (1996-2000)</b>	<b>Percent of WisDOT Personnel</b>
N =	3,015		431		3,751
DSP	1,351	193	45%	631	17%
Non-DSP	1,664	238	55%	3,120	83%
Total	3,015	431	100%	3,751	3,751

### Likelihood of Worker's Compensation Claims – DSP Versus Non-DSP Personnel

Dividing the average yearly claims by the average yearly employee population, DSP personnel are almost four times as likely to submit a worker's compensation claim compared to non-DSP personnel.

<b>WORKER'S COMPENSATION CLAIM LIKELIHOOD DSP VERSUS NON-DSP PERSONNEL</b>			
<b>WisDOT Personnel Type</b>	<b>Average Yearly Claims (1994 – 2000)</b>	<b>Average Number of Employees (1996-2000)</b>	<b>Average Yearly Claims Per Employee</b>
DSP	193	631	0.31
Non-DSP	238	3,120	0.08
Total	431	3,751	0.12

## ***Section Two: Database Analysis – Injury Analysis***

### **Annual Injury Leave by Type of WisDOT Personnel and DSP Sworn Job Title**

An analysis of injury time shows that sworn personnel are also more likely to be injured; about five times more likely than unsworn DSP personnel and three times more likely than non-DSP personnel.

Not only are sworn employees more likely to be injured, but their injuries seem to warrant longer time off. A DSP sworn employee takes an average of about 7 hours a year off for an injury incident, while an average unsworn employee or non-DSP employee would only take between 1 and 2 hours a year.

A comparison by type of DSP sworn personnel (job title) is not presented due to a small sample size (N=47) of injuries, thus the data may be unreliable for analysis.

However, troopers were more likely to have taken time off for an injury than inspectors and higher ranking personnel combined. In 2000 alone, there were a total of 35 injury incidents among troopers, 10 incidents among inspectors, and only four incidents for other high ranking sworn personnel. Similar to the analysis of sick leave, this trend is consistent historically.

<b>ANNUAL INJURY LEAVE</b>			
<b>YEAR 2000</b>			
	<b>N=</b>	<b>Mean<sup>4</sup> Annual Injury Incidents Per Employee</b>	<b>Mean Annual Injury Hours Per Employee</b>
<b>WisDOT Group</b>			
A – DSP Sworn	472	.10	6.83
B – DSP Unsworn	163	.02	1.47
C – Non-DSP	3149	.03	1.80

<sup>4</sup> Means are used for this analysis. This is due to the lower incidence of injury claims. If medians were used, all values would be zero.

## Section Two: Database Analysis – Fleet Accident Analysis

### Historical Analysis of DSP Fleet Accidents - 1996 to 2000

According to the Fleet Summary Accident Report (1996 to 2000) representing DSP personnel only, there were a total of 542 accidents during this five year period. This equates to an annual average of 108 accidents by DSP personnel.

<b>DSP FLEET ACCIDENT ANALYSIS</b>		
<b>1996 TO 2000</b>		
<b>Data Year</b>	<b>N =</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1996	105	19%
1997	101	19%
1998	104	19%
1999	122	23%
2000	110	20%
Total	542	100%
<b>Five Year Average – DSP Accidents</b>		<b>108</b>

### Type of DSP Fleet Accident - 1996 to 2000

Overall, over three-fourths (77%) of all DSP accidents happened while driving, with the largest majority of those involving hitting another vehicle (32%), hitting an object (22%), or hitting an animal (16%). The remaining 7% were caused by leaving the roadway (5%) or while in pursuit (2%).

<b>TYPE OF DSP FLEET ACCIDENT</b>		
<b>1996 to 2000</b>		
<b>Accident Type</b>	<b>N =</b>	<b>Percent of Total Accidents (1996 to 2000)</b>
Hit another vehicle	172	32%
Hit object	117	22%
Hit while parked	100	18%
Hit animal	87	16%
Left roadway	28	5%
Hit by object	13	2%
Hit while in pursuit	11	2%
Other/Unknown	14	3%
Total	542	100%

## Section Two: Database Analysis – Disciplinary Analysis

### Historical Analysis of Disciplinary Proceedings – 1995 to 2000

An analysis of the disciplinary actions show there were 191 disciplinary actions between 1995 and 2000, an average of 32 disciplinary proceedings each year.

<b>HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS</b>		
<b>1995 to 2000</b>		
<b>Data Year</b>	<b>N=</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1995	41	21%
1996	23	12%
1997	28	15%
1998	30	16%
1999	39	20%
2000	30	16%
Total	191	100%
<b>Five Year Average</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17%</b>

### Total Number of Disciplinary Proceedings 1995 to 2000 – DSP Versus Non-DSP

Of the 191 total disciplinary proceedings from 1995 to 2000, 81 proceedings or 42% involved DSP personnel. Considering DSP personnel reflect only 17% of all WisDOT employees, close to half of all disciplinary actions involved a segment that is only one-sixth of the entire WisDOT population. (Data for DSP sworn versus DSP unsworn was not available).

<b>NUMBER OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>DSP VERSUS NON-DSP EMPLOYEES</b>			
<b>1995 TO 2000</b>			
<b>Type of WisDOT Personnel</b>	<b>Total Number Of Disciplinary Proceedings</b>	<b>Percent of Disciplinary Proceedings</b>	<b>Percent of WisDOT Staff</b>
N =	191	100%	100%
DSP Employees	81	42%	17%
Non-DSP Employees	110	58%	83%

## Section Two: Database Analysis – Disciplinary Analysis

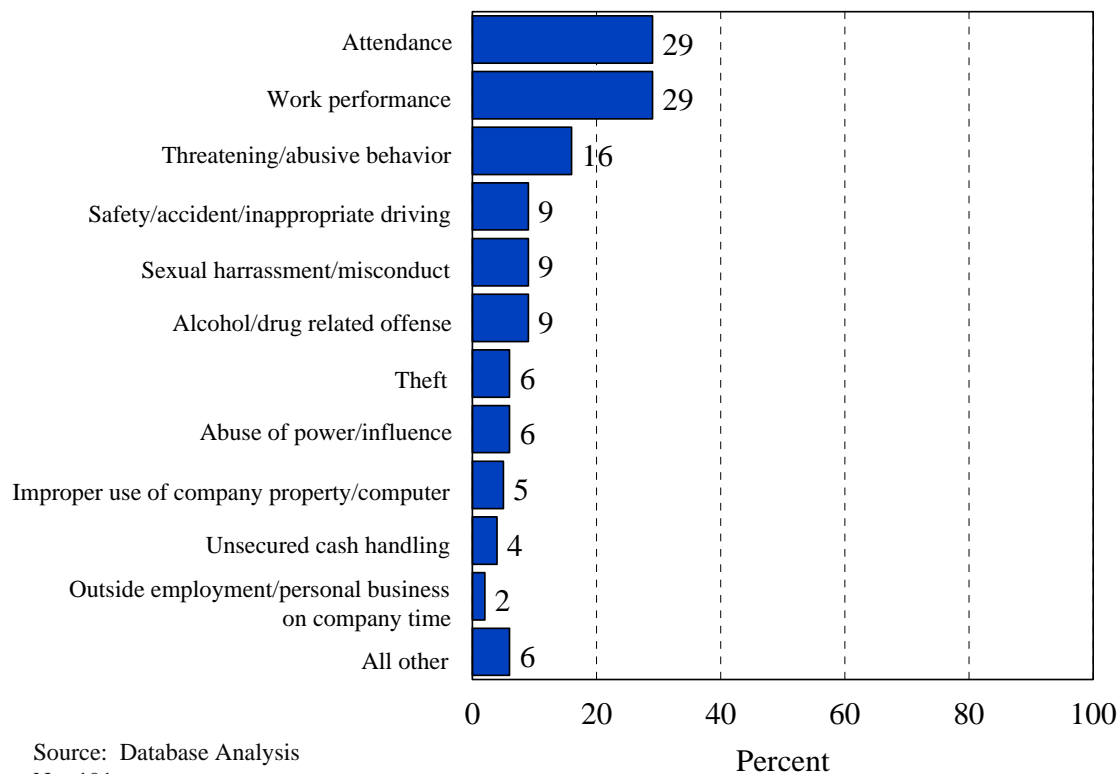
### Overall Reasons for Disciplinary Proceedings

The main reasons for disciplinary proceedings, overall, were attendance (29%), work performance (29%) and threatening/abusive behavior (16%).

Disciplinary actions for work performance include situations such as neglecting of duties, not following directives, failure to report/be prepared for court/hearings, falsifying records or information, and lying/changing evidence or providing false testimony.

Attendance disciplinary actions occurred as a result of failure to report, tardiness, or falsifying timesheets.

**Reasons for Disciplinary Actions**



## Section Two: Database Analysis – Disciplinary Analysis

### Reasons for Disciplinary Action – DSP Versus WisDOT Overall

Two of the top three causes for disciplinary action for DSP employees were the same as the overall findings, attendance (31%), work performance (44%). The third main reason for disciplinary action involving DSP personnel was safety/accident/inappropriate driving (12%).

However, the DSP accounts for a large portion of most types of disciplinary actions. Overall, 55 disciplinary actions occurred due to work performance, with 36 of the 55 total disciplinary proceedings involving DSP personnel. This means 65% of all work performance disciplinary actions involved DSP personnel.

DSP personnel also represent about half (45%) of all attendance disciplinary actions and 59% of all safety or accident disciplinary actions.

<b>WISDOT DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS</b>					
<b>1995 TO 2000</b>					
<b>Reasons for Disciplinary Proceedings (Multiple Response)<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Total WisDOT Disciplinary Proceedings</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total DSP Disciplinary Proceedings</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>DSP Percent of Total WisDOT Discipline Proceedings</b>
N =	191	100%	81	100%	44%
Attendance	55	29%	25	31%	45%
Work performance	55	29%	36	44%	65%
Threatening/abusive behavior	30	16%	8	10%	27%
Safety/accident/inappropriate driving	17	9%	10	12%	59%
Sexual harassment/misconduct	17	9%	8	10%	47%
Alcohol/drug related offense	17	9%	4	5%	24%
Theft	12	6%	3	4%	25%
Abuse of power/influence	11	6%	2	2%	18%
Improper use of company property/computer	10	5%	3	4%	30%
Unsecured cash handling	8	4%	0	--	--
Outside employment/personal business on company time	4	2%	4	5%	100%
All other	11	6%	6	7%	55%

<sup>5</sup> Disciplinary actions were frequently filed for a combination of reasons. Due to this, total actions will not sum to 191.

## Section Two: Database Analysis – Grievance Analysis

### Historical Analysis of Grievance Filings 1995 to 2000

According to the total grievance filings from 1995 to 2000, there were a total of 897 grievances in this six year period, averaging 150 per year.

<b>SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCES 1995 to 2000</b>		
<b><u>Data Year</u></b>	<b>N=</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1995 <sup>6</sup>	45	5%
1996	190	21%
1997	247	28%
1998	153	17%
1999	125	14%
2000	137	15%
Total	897	100%
<b>Average Number of Grievances Filed</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>17%</b>

### Total Number of Grievance Filings 1995 to 2000 – By Type of WisDOT Personnel

A small proportion of the WisDOT workforce filed a large proportion of the total grievances. Overall, DSP sworn grievances account for 45% of all 897 grievances, but DSP sworn personnel only account for 13% of WisDOT employees.

<b>NUMBER OF GRIEVANCES FILED BY TYPE OF WISDOT PERSONNEL 1995 TO 2000</b>			
<b>Type of WisDOT Personnel</b>	<b>Total Number of Grievances Filed</b>	<b>Percent of Total Grievances</b>	<b>Percent of WisDOT Staff</b>
N =	897	100%	100%
Non-DSP Employees	454	51%	83%
DSP Employees	443	49%	17%
DSP Sworn Employees	403	45%	13%
DSP Unsworn Employees	40	4%	4%

<sup>6</sup> Note, the 1995 figures may be lower than actual due to recording by contract year.



## Section Two: Database Analysis – Grievance Analysis

### Overall Reasons for Grievance Filings 1995 to 2000

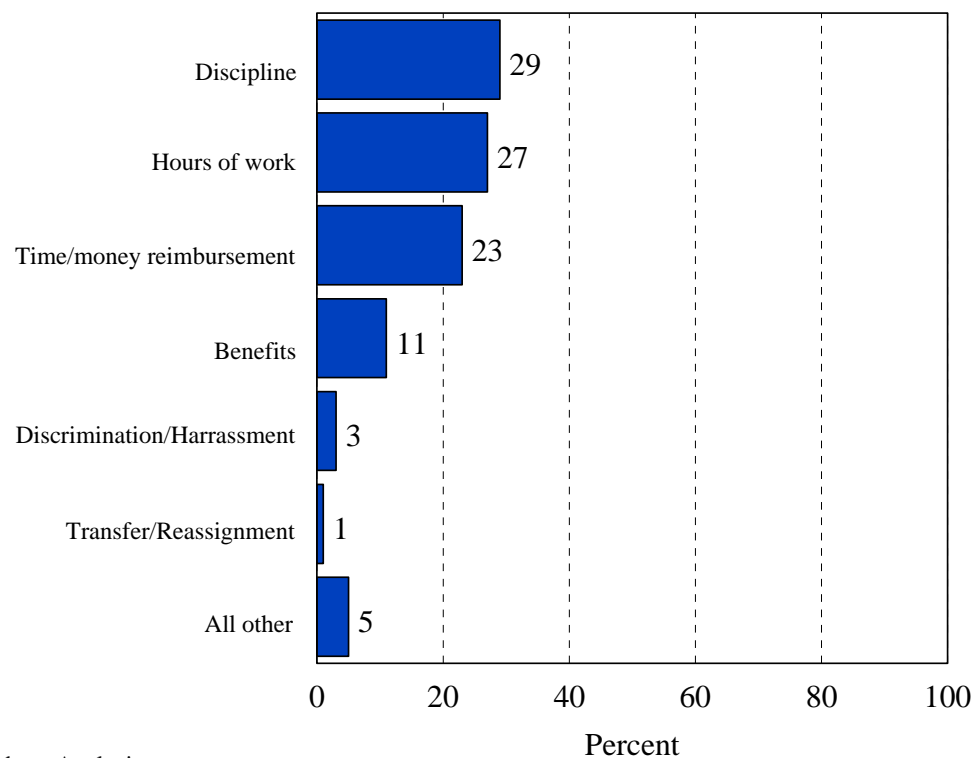
Overall, the most frequent reason for submitting a grievance can be attributed to a disciplinary action (29%), including suspension and letter of reprimand.

The second most frequent reason for a grievance filing involved hours of work, such as blocking out days for time off, vacation time, scheduling/shift changes, and overtime (27%).

Reimbursement for time or money (travel time, bag lunch, back pay/wrong pay, telephone) represent 23% of all 897 grievances.

Benefit grievances, including injury/hazardous duty claims, education/training, leave time, vision care, and job evaluation/salary, account for 11%.

**Summary of Grievances Filed**



Source: Database Analysis  
N = 897

## Section Two: Database Analysis – Grievance Analysis

### Reasons for Grievance Filings – By Type of WisDOT Personnel

Comparing the reasons for grievances by type of WisDOT employee, DSP personnel, overall, are more likely to submit a grievance for time or money reimbursement than non-DSP personnel, and less likely to file grievance for most other reasons. Both types of WisDOT personnel are equally likely to file a grievance for hours of work and transfer/reassignment.

DSP sworn personnel more commonly filed grievances for time/money reimbursement (39% of all DSP sworn grievances), disciplinary proceedings (25%) and hours of work (23%).

DSP unsworn personnel were also more likely to file grievances for time/money reimbursement (36% of all DSP unsworn grievances) but more likely to file a grievance regarding hours of work (41%) than DSP sworn (23%).

Non-DSP personnel most frequently filed grievances regarding disciplinary actions (35% of all non-DSP grievances) and hours of work (29%) but they were less likely to file a grievance for time or money reimbursement (8%) than both DSP sworn (39%) and DSP unsworn (36%).

REASONS FOR GRIEVANCES BY TYPE OF WISDOT PERSONNEL						
Reason for Grievances	Total WisDOT Personnel		Type of WisDOT Personnel			
	N =	Percent	Non-DSP Personnel	DSP Personnel		
				Total	Sworn	Unsworn
N =	897	897	454	443	403	40
Discipline	266	30%	35%	24%	25%	15%
Hours of work	238	27%	29%	25%	23%	41%
Time/money reimbursement	208	23%	8%	39%	39%	36%
Benefits	103	11%	16%	7%	8%	3%
Discrimination/harassment	30	3%	5%	2%	2%	--
Transfer/reassignment	10	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%
All other	42	5%	7%	3%	3%	1%
<b>Percent of Total Grievances</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>4%</b>

## Section Two: Database Analysis – Grievance Analysis

### Reasons for Grievance Filings - DSP Sworn Versus WisDOT Overall

Looking at the data another way, we see that overall, DSP sworn officers accounted for about 45% of all WisDOT grievances but only comprised 13% of the WisDOT workforce.

The most common grievance filed by DSP sworn personnel, time and money reimbursement (N=158), accounted for three-fourths (76%) of all time and money reimbursement grievances (N=208).

The next most frequent reasons for a DSP sworn grievance, discipline and hours of work, represent approximately one-third of the total grievances of each type, with 38% and 39%, respectively.

On the other hand, the sworn officers accounted for only 20% of the grievances concerning transfers and reassignments and 23% of the grievances concerning discrimination and harassment.

<b>WISDOT GRIEVANCE FILINGS</b>					
<b>1995 to 2000</b>					
<b>Reasons for Grievances</b>	<b>Total WisDOT Grievance Filings</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total DSP Sworn Grievance Filings</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>DSP Sworn Percent of Total WisDOT Grievance Filings</b>
N=		897		403	
Discipline	266	30%	101	25%	38%
Hours of Work	238	27%	92	23%	39%
Time/Money Reimbursement	208	23%	158	39%	76%
Benefits	103	11%	31	8%	30%
Discrimination/ Harassment	30	3%	7	2%	23%
Transfer/Reassignment	10	1%	2	1%	20%
All other	42	5%	12	3%	29%
<b>Total Grievances</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>45%</b>

## Section Two: Database Analysis –Personnel Transaction Analysis

### Historical Analysis of Personnel Transactions by Type of WisDOT Personnel

Personnel transactions were the last issue studied in the database analysis. In general, these transactions include transfers, promotions, reassignments as well as terminations due to health or work performance.

Within the transfer category, it not only reflects transfers within and outside the department, but also reflects the progression of academy cadets to troopers/inspectors. In order to control for this, the data was adjusted by excluding this type of personnel transaction from the transfer category.

In the past five years, an average of 21% of WisDOT employees have either transferred or been terminated for another reason, with little difference by type of WisDOT employee. However, there seems to be an increasing trend in the number of personnel transactions since 1996. In 1996, 17% of WisDOT employee positions were vacated, while in 2000 the percentage increased to 27%.

<b>PERSONNEL TRANSACTION ANALYSIS – ALL WISDOT</b>						
<b>1996 to 2000</b>						
WisDOT Employee Group	Five Year Average	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
<b>Total WisDOT Personnel</b>	<b>3,751</b>	<b>3,730</b>	<b>3,787</b>	<b>3,707</b>	<b>3,745</b>	<b>3,784</b>
A – DSP Sworn	472	434	486	485	483	472
B – DSP Unsworn	159	160	154	152	166	163
C – Non-DSP	3,120	3,136	3,147	3,070	3,096	3,149
<b>Total WisDOT Personnel Transactions (Net)</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>1,006</b>
A – DSP Sworn (Net)	112	98	113	120	125	104
(DSP Sworn	143	135	140	149	149	141
less Academy Graduates)	31	37	27	29	24	37
B – DSP Unsworn	27	13	34	34	24	29
C – Non-DSP	654	526	549	600	723	873
<b>Total Percent of Personnel Transactions (Net)</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>27%</b>
A – DSP Sworn (Net)	24%	23%	23%	25%	26%	22%
B – DSP Unsworn	17%	8%	22%	22%	14%	18%
C – Non-DSP	21%	17%	17%	20%	23%	28%

## Section Two: Database Analysis –Personnel Transaction Analysis

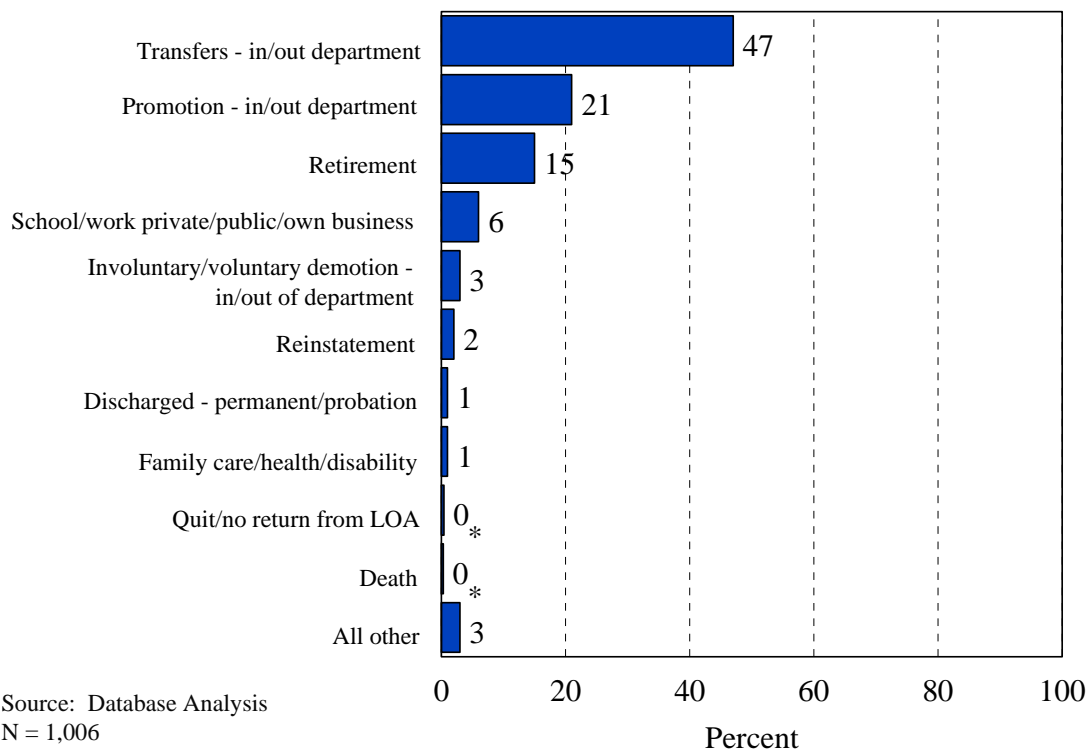
### Reasons for Personnel Transactions – Year 2000

An analysis of the reasons for the personnel transactions was conducted in order to identify and better understand the transactions.

Controlling for cadet progression, about half of all personnel transactions in 2000 were transfers (47%). Promotions and retirement accounted for the other more frequent reasons, with 21% and 15% of all personnel transactions, respectively.

A very low percentage of employees were demoted (3%) or discharged (1%).

**Reasons for Personnel Transactions (Year 2000)**



Source: Database Analysis

N = 1,006

\*Less than 0.5%.

Excludes Cadet progression.

## Section Two: Database Analysis –Personnel Transaction Analysis

### Reasons for Personnel Transactions by Type of WisDOT Personnel (Year 2000)

Comparing the transaction reasons by type of WisDOT personnel does provide some insight. Sworn personnel and non-DSP personnel are more likely to transfer than unsworn personnel.

Unsworn personnel are more likely to leave WisDOT for outside employment or school than DSP sworn or non-DSP personnel.

<b>REASONS FOR PERSONNEL TRANSACTIONS BY TYPE OF WISDOT PERSONNEL YEAR 2000</b>				
Termination Reasons	Total WisDOT Personnel	DSP Personnel		Non-DSP Personnel
		Sworn Personnel**	Unsworn Personnel	
<i>N =</i>	1,006	104	29	873
<b><i>Transfers – in/out department</i></b>	47%	<b>57%</b>	28%	<b>46%</b>
Promotion – in/out department	21%	8%	<b>24%</b>	<b>23%</b>
Retirement	15%	13%	14%	15%
School/work - private/public/own business	6%	2%	<b>21%</b>	6%
Involuntary/voluntary demotion – in/out of department	3%	2%	--	3%
Reinstatement	2%	1%	7%	2%
Discharged – permanent/probation	1%	1%	--	1%
Family care/health/disability	1%	--	--	1%
Quit/no return from LOA	*	1%	--	*
Death	*	--	3%	*
All other	3%	<b>16%</b>	3%	2%
*Less than 1%				
**Controlled for Cadet Progression				

# **APPENDIX A**

## **SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**



**Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Division of State Patrol Stress Evaluation Questionnaire**

*Please answer the following questions as accurately and frankly as possible. Remember that your answers will be kept anonymous. All questionnaire results will be combined so that no individual responses will be identifiable.*

**Part One: Sources of Stress**

1. Please rate your level of stress using the following 1 to 5 scale.

	<u>Not at all Stressed</u>				<u>Very Stressed</u>
a. Job-related stress as sworn personnel .....	1	2	3	4	5
b. Overall level of stress (work, family, or any other type).....	1	2	3	4	5

2. Using a 1 to 5 scale, overall, please indicate the level of stress caused by each of the following sources.  
(Circle "6" if an item does not apply to you.)

	<u>Not at all Stressful</u>				<u>Very Stressful</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
a. Danger on the job.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Superiors "second guessing" your actions.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Your superiors in DSP.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Other officers in DSP.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Media coverage of law enforcement.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Courts and the criminal justice system .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Attitude of the public toward law enforcement .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. Your home life or family life .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. Overtime or extra hours worked .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. Shift work .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. Paperwork on the job .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
l. Concern about contracting disease, such as HIV/AIDS .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
m. Racial or ethnic issues.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
n. Gender issues, such as sexual harassment .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
o. Combination of too many pressures .....	1	2	3	4	5	6

3. In the last five (5) years, have you:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
a. Been injured in the line of duty?.....	1	2
b. Had a near-miss in the line of duty? .....	1	2
c. Seen another officer injured in the line of duty? .....	1	2
d. Killed a suspect in the line of duty? .....	1	2
e. Seen another officer killed in the line of duty? .....	1	2
f. Know of another officer in DSP killed in the line of duty? .....	1	2
g. Attended a funeral of any law enforcement officer killed in the line of duty? .....	1	2
h. Been "second guessed" unfairly about what you did?.....	1	2
i. Seen victims who were killed or badly injured?.....	1	2
j. Known an officer who committed suicide? .....	1	2



4. About how many officers, that you know personally, suffer from job-related stress?

- All of them..... 1  
 Most of them..... 2  
 About half of them..... 3  
 Less than half of them ..... 4  
 Just a few of them..... 5  
 None of them ..... 6  
 Don't know..... 7

## **Part Two: Personal Experiences**

*Some questions are very personal, but your answers are important and will remain anonymous.*

5. The following is a list of situations that may or may not be attributed to stress. Please answer if you have experienced each of the following, whether or not you believe it was due to stress. In the last five (5) years, have you:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>NA</u>
a. Been divorced or separated from your spouse or life partner? .....	1	2	3
b. Had serious marital or relationship problems without getting divorced or separated? .....	1	2	3
c. Abused alcohol or other drugs? .....	1	2	3
d. Been diagnosed as depressed by a doctor? .....	1	2	3
e. Gained or lost too much weight? .....	1	2	3
f. Considered suicide? .....	1	2	3
g. Had high blood pressure?.....	1	2	3
h. Had a heart attack?.....	1	2	3
i. Been diagnosed with diabetes?.....	1	2	3
j. Had other serious medical problems? .....	1	2	3
k. Used too much force on the job? .....	1	2	3
l. Suffered from sleeplessness? .....	1	2	3
m. Become more irritable or quick-tempered? .....	1	2	3
n. Suffered from forgetfulness? .....	1	2	3
o. Been too listless—just don't give a damn?.....	1	2	3
p. Experienced panic attacks? .....	1	2	3
q. Experienced flashbacks?.....	1	2	3

6. In the last 12 months (1 year), how many hours have you taken for:

- a. Sick leave? ..... hours  
 b. Disability leave? ..... hours  
 c. Medical leave of absence? ..... hours

## **Part Three: Services Available/Used**

7. Which services are available to use in your department if you suffer from job-related stress? (*Circle all that apply.*)

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)..... 1  
 Drug/Alcohol treatment..... 2  
 Other professional counseling ..... 3  
 Critical Incident Stress training and debriefings..... 4  
 Other .....  
 Nothing ..... 98  
 Don't Know ..... 99

8. What have you done about job-related stress? (*Circle all that apply.*)

- Talked informally to other officers..... 1  
 Talked with friends outside the department..... 2  
 Talked with family..... 3  
 Talked with an EAP counselor ..... 4  
 Talked with another professional counselor ..... 5  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nothing ..... 98

**(If you indicated you talked with an EAP or other professional counselor in Question 8, please continue to Question 9, otherwise skip to Question 10).**

9. When you talked with an EAP or other professional counselor, please rate the helpfulness of the experience on the following 1 to 5 scale.

	Not at all <u>Helpful</u>				Very <u>Helpful</u>
Helpfulness of experience .....	1	2	3	4	5

9a. How long, in days, did you wait *before you asked for help*? (Indicate a "0" if same day) ..... days

9b. How long, in days, did you wait to see an EAP or other professional counselor *after you asked for help*? (Indicate a "0" if same day) ..... days

10. Using the following 1 to 5 scale, whether or not you have used EAP counseling or other professional counseling, what is your opinion on the usefulness of each counseling source in helping someone deal with job-related stress?

	Not at all <u>Useful</u>				Very <u>Useful</u>	No <u>Opinion</u>
a. EAP counseling.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Internal program (DOT EAP staff or volunteers) ...	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. External program (Symmetry, Crites, Gundersen Lutheran) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Drug/Alcohol treatment .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Other (non-EAP) counseling.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

11. Using the following 1 to 5 scale, in your opinion (prior to the knowledge of this survey), how concerned are the following groups with job-related stress among sworn officers?

	Not At All <u>Concerned</u>				Very <u>Concerned</u>	No <u>Opinion</u>
a. Immediate Supervisors .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Other DSP Management Staff .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. The Union .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Your Peers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Part Four: Respondent Profile

*These questions are being asked in order to classify your responses, putting similar officers together, to allow for comparisons between different types of groups. Again, your individual answers are completely anonymous and the results will only be presented in summary.*

12. Are you: Male..... 1  
Female ..... 2

13. What is your age?  
18 – 24 ..... 1  
25 – 29 ..... 2  
30 - 39 ..... 3  
40 - 49 ..... 4  
50 - 59 ..... 5  
60 or above ..... 6

14. What is your job title?  
Trooper ..... 1  
Sergeant ..... 2  
Inspector ..... 3  
Other (do not specify)..... 4

15. How long have you worked as a sworn officer, including DSP and any other department or jurisdiction?  
Less than 5 years ..... 1  
5 to 9 years..... 2  
10 years or more ..... 3

16. Write any other comments or suggestions you have below.

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**Thank you for your assistance.**

**Please mail your completed questionnaire by Friday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>,  
in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:**

**The Dieringer Research Group  
3064 N. 78<sup>th</sup> Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53222**

**Do not identify yourself in any way. Remember that all of your answers are anonymous.**

## **APPENDIX B**

# **STATISTICAL RELIABILITY AND LIMITATIONS**

## *Statistical Reliability and Limitations*

Reliability is a measure of the precision of a sample estimate of a population value. Worded another way, it refers to the similarity of results provided by independent but comparable measures of the same population. It is dependent primarily upon survey sample size.

As the sample size increases, the margin of error (sampling error) decreases, thereby providing more reliable data. That is, larger sample sizes will give us more precise estimates of the actual population percentages, so we can be “confident” with larger sample sizes that smaller differences are “significant.”

As a generalization, a sample of 362 randomly selected respondents, such as we have for our total returned questionnaires, will generate data reliable with a  $\pm 5\%$  sampling error at a 95% confidence level. That is, if a similar survey were conducted 100 times, results within  $\pm 5\%$  of the true population value would occur for any one question 95 out of 100 times. More specifically, if a question received a "yes" answer by 60% of the 362 respondents, the chances are 95 out of 100 that between 55.0% and 65.0% of the total population would lodge a similar "yes" response, if asked.

However, in this case, the sampling error can be made more precise. Because the sample (362 responses) represents a large portion of the total population (530 DSP sworn personnel) the finite correction factor can be applied, which decreases the sampling error to  $\pm 3\%$ .

In addition to determining the total sampling error, independent z-tests were conducted on the percentages and t-tests were conducted on the means to determine significant differences between demographic groups. If the difference between the two percentages (or the two means) in question is large enough, we say the difference is “significant.” If the difference is not large enough, we say it is “not significant.”

Whether the difference between two percentages is “significant” depends on the size of the difference and the sizes of the two samples. For example, if 55% of men and 65% of women answered “Yes” to a certain question, we use the sampling error of the difference between percentages to determine if that difference of ten percentage points is “significant.”

For means, whether the difference between two means is “significant” depends on the size of the differences, the sample sizes, and the standard deviations of the two samples. In calculating significance for means, we use the sampling error of the difference between the means.

If we say that the difference is significant at the 95% level of confidence, we are saying that we are 95% sure that a difference that large could not appear simply from sampling error.

## Statistical Reliability and Limitations

The sampling error for each cross-tabulation cell used in this report is shown in the table below.

Banner Point		N=	Sampling Error
Total		362	±5%
Job Title	Trooper	244	±6%
	Inspector	66	±12%
	Other	51	±14%
Years as Sworn Officer	Less than 5 Years	72	±12%
	5 to 9 Years	52	±14%
	10 or More Years	238	±6%
Level of Job-Related Stress	Low (1-3 ratings)	171	±7%
	High (4 - 5 ratings)	185	±7%
Level of Overall Stress	Low (1-3 ratings)	256	±6%
	High (4 - 5 ratings)	100	±10%
Talked with Professional Counselor	Yes	64	±12%
	No	298	±6%

### Definition of Statistical Measures Used

In parts of this report we may refer to different statistical measures. A brief explanation of these will facilitate individual usage and analysis.

The arithmetic **Mean** is the most common measure of central tendency for variables measured at the interval level. Often referred to as the “average,” it is merely the sum of the individual values for each case divided by the number of cases. The mean is a valuable tool for data analysis; however, it is a fixed point and does not indicate the range of responses.

The **Standard Deviation** is a measure of the dispersion about the mean of an interval-level variable. More plainly stated, it is a measure of how close or how far all the answers are from the mean. The wider the spread in the response, the larger the standard deviation. It is used in comparing the variability of different groups. It is possible to have the same mean but differ in variability. The advantage of the standard deviation is that it has a more intuitive interpretation, being based on the same units as the original variable.

The **Median** is the numerical value of the middle case or the case lying exactly on the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, once all the cases have been ranked ordered from highest to lowest. For example, if the answers were from 1 to 51, 26 would be the median, therefore there would be 25 answers above and 25 answers below the median. The median can be a better measure of central tendency than the mean when the sample is very small or when values are highly dispersed (extreme outlying values).

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF STATE PATROL**

**EXAMINING STRESS LEVELS OF DSP ENFORCEMENT  
PERSONNEL AND INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES**

PROJECT ID: 0092-01-07

**STEP 2: COMPARISON OF DSP PERSONNEL TO  
OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES  
FINAL REPORT**

SUBMITTED TO:  
THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NOVEMBER, 2001

PREPARED BY:  
THE DIERINGER RESEARCH GROUP, INC.



## ***Types of Law Enforcement Stress***

Law enforcement stress has been defined many different ways by many different authors. Crank and Caldero (1991) define it as any condition which has adverse consequences for a police officer's well being. According to Sigler and Wilson (1988), stress is defined as the perceived imbalance between societal demands and perceived response capability where failure to meet the demands produces dysfunction that results in reduced performance. Not only can law enforcement stress adversely impact the delivery of effective law enforcement, it poses a threat to the safety of police officers, their co-workers, their family and friends, and the general public (Brown & Campbell, 1994).

Over the years, many studies have concluded that police work is one of the most stressful jobs while others have listed police work as highly stressful, but not among the top ten most stressful occupations. Whether police work is ranked as one of the most stressful is not the real issue. What must be acknowledged is that police work can be stressful. (More, 1992)

In general, there are five main sources of stress inherent in most occupations, being caused by both external and internal forces. The pages following will discuss the five different types of stressors, outlining the stress factors inherent in each type specific to law enforcement and will report any significant findings from studies conducted on law enforcement stress.

### **External Sources of Stress**

- 1) ***Environmental Stressors***- those that stem from the actions or reactions of entities outside the organization or in the public, political or professional environment in which the organization operates.
- 2) ***Occupational Stressors*** – those that are innate to the particular job responsibility or occupation.
- 3) ***Organizational Stressors*** – those that are intrinsic to the internal organizational practices, culture, and conditions.
- 4) ***Social Stressors*** – those related to the individual's family, friends or colleagues.

### **Internal Sources of Stress**

- 5) ***Personal or Individual Stressors*** - those related to the individual's personality and their approach to stressful events.



# Environmental Stressors

According to the literature reviewed, environmental stressors, including stress caused by the criminal justice system, the public, the media, local government, and other social agencies, did seem to be a cause of stress for law enforcement officers. However the level of stress from the environmental sources was considered to be moderate in its effect. The most frequently cited sources of environmental stress were:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>The Criminal Justice System*</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ failure to prosecute criminals adequately</li><li>◆ effectiveness of the judicial system</li><li>◆ unfavorable court decisions</li><li>◆ leniency on offenders</li></ul></li></ul> | <u>Public Practices and Characteristics</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ distorted/negative press accounts</li><li>◆ adverse local government decisions</li><li>◆ lack of respect from the public*</li><li>◆ negative publicity/public scrutiny*</li></ul> |
|---|---|

## ▪ The Criminal Justice System

As explained by Eisenberg (1975), the criminal justice system practices and characteristics refer to conditions which ordinarily exist among agencies (probation, parole, law enforcement agencies, corrections, courts, and public defenders and prosecutors) within the criminal justice system. He summarizes that the “system” is better characterized as a conglomerate of fragmented agencies, which have a common mission. The criminal justice system is frequently mentioned as a source of stress for many reasons.

- Failure to prosecute criminals adequately: Seven percent of respondents in the Crank and Caldero study (1991) cited the judiciary system as a primary source of stress. All of these respondents expressed the failure of the judicial system to prosecute criminals adequately.
- Ineffectiveness of the judicial system: In the more recent Anson, Johnson, & Anson study (1997), the ineffectiveness of the judicial system was the fifth highest source of stress to study respondents, with a mean stress level of 3.12 (or moderate stress).
- Unfavorable court decisions (*too restrictive on methods of criminal suppression/investigation*): Townsend (1998) reports that, on average, sworn officers in a state police agency consider court decisions only as somewhat stressful. Anson et al (1997) also studied this stress source and found it is close to moderately stressful (2.77 with 3.00 being moderately stressful).
- Leniency on offenders: Stratton (1986) reports that the judicial arena is frequently cited as a source of occupational stress, being perceived as sympathetic to criminals and insensitive to police concerns. Kroes, Margolis, and Hurrell (1974) also found this to be a major stressor on police officers. This source of stress, categorized as courts too easy, is the 11<sup>th</sup> highest source of stress in the Anson et al study (1997), with a mean stress level of 2.81 (with 3.00 being moderately stressful).

Other environmental stressors were uncovered, although no supporting statistics have been found. These other stressors include:

- Inefficient courtroom management (inconveniently scheduled court appearances, long waits before testifying.)
- Preoccupation with street crime compared to white collar
- Perceived lack of respect from judges, lawyers, and others in the Criminal Justice System
- Misunderstanding of judicial procedure
- Ineffectiveness of Corrections system (*recidivism rate of perpetual criminals – premature release of offenders on bail, probation, or parole*)
- Officers perceive being caught between an unsupportive and sometimes hostile citizenry and an inefficient court and corrections system. (Stratton, 1986)

## ***Environmental Stressors***

- Public Practices and Characteristics

- Distorted/negative press accounts

In the 1998 study of a state police agency by Townsend, these officers generally found negative news coverage as “somewhat stressful.”

- Unfavorable majority attitudes (*accused of as incompetent by majority members of a community*)

In the two studies of police officers and administrators in 1974, Kroes et al. find that both types of respondent reported problems with community relations, public apathy, lack of support for the policeman doing his job, and the policeman’s negative image. This stress factor seems to effect both officers and superiors, in that it was among the top three stressors in both studies.

- Adverse local government decisions (*budgetary restrictions, police-citizen hearing boards*)

In the Crank and Caldero study (1991), five officers or 3% of the sample mentioned the city government as the primary source of stress, mentioning their insensitivity to the problems confronted by the department and lack of municipal support for salary increases.

- Ineffectiveness/Inaccessibility of referral agencies

According to the National Victim Assistance Academy, victim service providers are expected to provide support for crime victims as well as be outspoken advocates to make sure the victims are extended their rights within the criminal justice system. This text also states that many crime victim assistance professionals work within the very system they are trying to change and improve, knowing its limitations directly. This responsibility of serving in conflicting roles can be another source of stress to law enforcement professionals.

- Perceived increase in negative publicity, public scrutiny, and lawsuits (*Rodney King, OJ, Waco*)

Two-thirds of respondents in the Project SHIELDS study (Gershon, 2000) indicate they agree or strongly agree that the media reports of alleged police wrongdoing are biased against law enforcement officers.

- Perceived lack of respect from the public (*such as watchdog groups*)

Storch and Panzarella (1996) found that public blame or public condemnation of police, negative stereotyping of police, and public distrust and disapproval was second among the dislikes of police work.

Townsend (1998) reports that the lack of respect from the public is considered somewhat stressful to state police officers.

- Unfavorable minority attitudes (*allegations of brutality and racism*)

Although no studies were uncovered that measured the impact of this environmental stress source directly, other studies did mention it anecdotally.

It is not possible, based on the data available and reviewed, to attempt to indicate which one of the environmental stress sources caused more stress to law enforcement professionals.

# *Occupational Stressors*

Based on the literature reviewed, occupational stressors or those that are innate to the particular job responsibility or occupation, also impact the level of law enforcement stress. Similar to environmental stressors, the impact of occupational stressors is also moderate. The specific types of occupational stress studied more frequently are listed below.

- fear and danger on the job\*
- role conflict
- public image\*
- burst stress
- critical incidents
- frequent exposure to human depravity or suffering
- pressure of the responsibility for protecting other people
- fear of air- or blood-borne diseases

## ➤ Fear and danger on the job

Law enforcement is among the more dangerous occupations, with most fatalities due to highway events and homicide. According to the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2000, there were a total of 142 fatal occupational injuries in the police/detectives occupation in 2000. Although this represents only 2% of all fatal occupational injuries, the fatality rate (per 100,000 employed) for police and detectives was 12.1, almost 3 times the average occupational fatality rate of 4.3.

The main cause of these 142 fatalities were highway events (38%), defined as death to vehicle occupants resulting from traffic incidents that occur on the public roadway, shoulder, or surrounding area. This percentage was second highest of all occupations, with the transportation and material moving occupations (overall, including truck and cab drivers) with the highest percent of fatal occupational injuries attributed to highway events (55%).

Alarming, almost just as many fatal occupational injuries to police and detectives were a result of homicide (35% of 142 fatalities). However, other occupations had a higher percentage of their industry's fatal occupational injuries attributed to homicide, including cashiers (82%), food serving and lodging establishment managers (67%), taxicab drivers and chauffeurs (60%), and guards (46%).

Interestingly, even though the law enforcement occupation is very dangerous, unless a questionnaire specifically asks about danger, violence, or human misery as a source of stress, police officers seldom mention them (Storch and Panzarella, 1996). In their study, danger or fear was ranked tenth in a list of eighteen dislikes as a police officer. In addition, they found that how often an officer thinks about the possibility of injury while on duty was correlated with trait (personality) anxiety and with the number of injuries the officer actually experienced. A single injury did not seem to affect anxiety levels. There were some officers who have never been injured but worried about sustaining an injury very often. Thinking about injuries seems to be more of a personality trait than a concern in general.

Danger was also infrequently mentioned as a top occupational stressor in the Crank and Caldero (1991) study, with 21% or 6 of the 28 respondents indicating occupational stressors as a primary source of stress. This equates to 3% of the entire study sample of 205 law enforcement respondents. However, the study concludes that this infrequency of occurrence does not imply that danger is not stressful to law enforcement officers. It is suggested that that occupational "danger was not viewed with the same stress-producing negativity as organizational sources of stress." This study also mentions that the infrequency of mentions may be due to the medium

# Occupational Stressors

organizational size of the departments studied, in that the crime levels experienced by these organizations was lower than that of many large metropolitan areas.

Walker (1993) states that stress does not result from the presence of occupational dangers but from the perceptions of potential danger. Cullen, Link, Lawrence, and Lemming (1983) found that police officers surveyed in their research did not believe their work was likely to result in personal injury but believed their work carried a substantial potential for danger, and it was the potential for danger that contributed to stress. Kroes et al (1974) offer the explanation that physical dangers at work may be kept from consciousness for one's psychological well-being, in that if they continually worried about danger, many would not be able to maintain their sanity or their job for very long.

Respondents to the Anson et al (1997) ranked stress sources related to danger on the job as moderately high. The risk of physical attack ranked seventh (3.02) in their study and being in a hazardous situation ranked ninth (2.97).

## ➤ Role conflict (*enforcer of the law, social worker, counselor, public servant*)

As far back as the 1960s, Kahn conducted a study that showed that workers experiencing role conflict were found to experience more job-related tension and less job satisfaction (More, 1992).

Chapman (1970) contends that law enforcement officers can develop personal conflicts by being placed in the position of having to choose between one or more contradictory goals, such as loyalty to fellow officers, conflicts arising from temptation, fear, or inability to ease human suffering.

Similarly, Anson, Johnson, & Anson (1997) measured the stress level emanating from this source, categorized as job conflict, and found this to be eighth highest source of stress in their sample, causing moderate (3.00) stress to law enforcement officers.

## ➤ Public image

Crank and Caldero (1991) found that within the task (occupational) environment, the respondents felt the public has certain images and expectations of a law enforcement officer. And this image was usually negative, in that "most people aren't happy to see the police, and it usually is for some sort of negative contact." This type of stress accounted for almost 29% of all the occupational (or task environment) stressors mentioned.

## ➤ Roller coaster or burst stress (*boredom interrupted by sudden need for alertness and quick action*)

According to Storch and Panzarella (1996), when dramatic events do occur, they are often experienced as "eustress" or positive stress by officers who enjoy the excitement of the job.

## ➤ Human suffering/ Frequent exposure to human depravity and human suffering

The nature of police work exposes officers to people whom have or are suffering severe trauma and loss, requiring tremendous emotional energy and resilience. This continual exposure and the necessity to remain objective can also be a source of stress.

# *Occupational Stressors*

- Critical incidents (*shootings, hostage situations, environmental disasters, crime scenes with death or severe injury*)

Gershon (2000) finds that officers repeatedly exposed to events that would be considered critical events, such as a police funeral, shooting incident, or needlestick injury, are nearly nine times more likely to report high levels of work stress.

According to Sewell et al, (1998) two-thirds of officers involved in shootings suffer moderate or severe problems and about 70% leave the force within seven years.

- Increase in violent crime

Some earlier studies (sources) suggest the increase in violent crime has an impact on the stress level of law enforcement officers. However, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (Bureau of Justice Statistics of the US Department of Justice, 2000) and the Uniform Crime Report (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1999) reports that violent crime has decreased every year from 1993 to 2000, from 4,191,000 to 2,186,700, a decrease of 52%. (Violent crime includes rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and homicide.)

The latest figures (1999) from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) show that the reported number of violent crimes has decreased from 1,648,100 in 1993 to 1,130,700 in 1999, a decrease of almost 69%.

- Pressure of the responsibility for protecting other people

Dealing with crime victims present unique stressors to law enforcement professionals and other assistance professionals beyond those that are experienced by professionals and volunteers in other work environments.

This source of stress is considered as somewhat stressful to state police officers participating in the 1998 study by Townsend.

- Fear of air- or blood-borne diseases

Although the risk with contracting these types of diseases does exist, the risk (or perceived risk) can be effectively reduced with training or education of the officer. No studies were uncovered that evaluated this occupational stressor in detail.

Other occupational stressors uncovered include (but are not limited to):

- Stressful assignments (*undercover duty or drug raids*)
- Sense of uselessness (*inability to completely resolve people's problems*)
- Absence of closure (*minimal feedback on results, limited follow-up opportunities*) – *environmental too*
- Twenty plus years (*stress is cumulative in nature, and stressful events are connected to one another with long-term continuity.*)

## *Organizational Stressors*

Many believe that the danger inherent in police work is the primary source of law enforcement stress, however organizational stressors have been repeatedly mentioned as a primary source of stress to law enforcement professionals, as far back as 1974 (Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell). Many subsequent studies have found this to be true (Crank and Caldero, 1991; Violanti & Aron, 1993, Storch & Panzarella, 1996; Anson, Johnson, & Anson, 1997, Townsend, 1998; and Gershon, 2000).

These stressors are intrinsic to the internal organizational practices, culture, and conditions and are consistently a much higher stressor than the risks inherent in law enforcement.

A 1991 study of 205 line officers from eight Illinois municipal districts conducted by Crank and Caldero (1991) found that 68% of respondents cited the organization as a principal source of stress.

Violanti and Aron (1993) define organizational stressors as events precipitated by police administration that bothers members of the organization. In this study, they reported that organizational stressors had an effect on distress of approximately 6.3 times that of inherent police stressors (those generally occurring in police work which have the potential to be psychologically or physically harmful to officers). Later research by Violanti and Aron (1995) states that organizational practices and the inherent nature of police work are the two main categories of stressors to law enforcement professionals. It is their opinion that interdepartmental practices are a continuous source of distress in police work. This study found that of the top twenty ranked stressors, seven were organizational/administrative.

These same results are evident in more recent studies. Storch and Panzarella (1996) conducted a study of 79 police officers in the United States (state unknown) using likes and dislikes of the job as measures of stress. These authors conclude that the principal law enforcement stressors tend to be administrative matters and public image concerns rather than encounters with violence or human misery.

Results of a 1997 study of 48 officers in a mid-size agency in Albany, GA conducted by Anson, Johnson, & Anson (1997) show that the top four sources of stress are organizational type stressors. These include (in rank order of the mean) lack of agency support, lack of promotional opportunity, lack of recognition for good work, and inadequate number of personnel.

In an even more recent study (Townsend, 1998) seven of the ten top rated stressors in a Midwestern state police agency are considered organizational stressors. Specifically, these organizational stressors are: insufficient personnel, being disciplined inappropriately, inadequate salaries, politics within the agency, lack of support from personnel, excessive paperwork, and inadequate equipment. The other three are factors considered inherent in law enforcement, specifically death/injury to another officer, killing someone, and high speed chases.

In 2000, Gershon indicates that officers who feel they are repeatedly exposed to work climate stressors are three and one-half times more likely to report high levels of stress.

# Organizational Stressors

## *Types of Organizational Stressors*

Within the process of reviewing existing literature, numerous sources of organizational stress are mentioned. This report will primarily discuss those mentioned most frequently and/or studied in-depth rather than anecdotally. In some cases, some of the information presented for each source of organizational stress comes from studies prior to 1996. However all of the stress sources listed or discussed in this report are derived from the comprehensive 1996 NIJ report “Developing a Law Enforcement Stress Program for Officers and Their Families.”

The NIJ report presents two types of organizational stressors,

- 1) intra-organizational stressors -- those within the specific organization, and
- 2) inter-organizational stressors -- those with other police organizations within or around their jurisdiction.

Following are the specific intra-organizational stressors that have been evaluated in other studies most frequently.

- paramilitary structure
- lack of reward/recognition for good work
- perceived excessive/unnecessary paperwork\*
- supervisors/administrators\*
  - perceived favoritism
  - second guessing\*
  - lack of administration support
  - inconsistent/arbitrary disciplinary actions
- workplace perception of discrimination and inequity\*
- lack of input into policy/decision making
- police culture of machismo
- lack of career development opportunities
- shift work\*
- financial or economic issues
- antagonistic subcultures within dept.

### ➤ Paramilitary structure

As stated in a 1990 paper “Police Stress and Organizational Formulation: Explaining Individual Responses by Organizational Traits” (Albert, 1990) “the officer is part of a strict chain of command, yet he is often unsupervised in his work.”

According to study on job satisfaction and job-related stress by Winfree, Guiterman, and Mays (1995), the classic military-style police department functions as a patriarchal family. The chief is the father, the “brass” is the older siblings, and the patrol officers are the younger siblings. The brass attempts to hold all the father’s attention, while the patrol officers are fighting for the father’s attention. The study also contends this departmental hierarchy is the cause of lower job satisfaction and unfavorable workplace perceptions. It is their opinion that the “pecking order” should be eliminated through officers’ involvement in decision making to increase job satisfaction and perceptions of the workplace.

Violanti and Aron (1995) conclude that the paramilitary structure of organizations does not seem to allow for meaningful interpersonal relationships between supervisors and subordinates. Martelli et al (1989) reports that the inherent nature of the organizational structure of law enforcement agencies is such that there is a potential for development of stress vertically (top down) as well as horizontally, best characterized as peer pressure.

# *Organizational Stressors*

Honig and White (1994) present an interesting conflict in the paramilitary structure of police organizations. The law enforcement agency paramilitary structure has been the norm, however agencies attempt to select individuals who are flexible and have better interpersonal skills. This is presented as unreasonable to select recruits for their flexibility and interpersonal skills and then maintain an inflexible hierarchical structure. They state that incorporating interpersonal skills and flexibility must occur from the top down through both formal and informal training and policies that allow and encourage bottom-up input.

It is well known that communication is an effective tool in reducing conflict. Without meaningful interpersonal relationships or communication between superiors and subordinates, the misunderstanding and conflict between the two groups will perpetuate and continue to be a source of stress for both parties. Better communication or interpersonal relationships may clarify the expectations of supervisors and subordinates, thus reducing misunderstanding and conflict.

## ➤ Supervisors/Administrators\*

Supervisors or administrators, or their style of employee or agency management are frequently mentioned as a source of organizational stress for law enforcement professionals. Although, problems with superiors are a common problem in many occupations, in both the public and private sector, it seems to be common place in police or law enforcement agencies “industry-wide,” and has been identified as a problem for many years.

Administrators or superiors have been continually identified as a major source of stress, at least as far back as 1974. In 1974, Kroes, Margolis & Hurell conducted a study of 100 officers in Cincinnati. In that study, 69% of officers mentioned administration (policies, procedures, and support of patrolmen) as bothersome. In 1991, Crank and Caldero found that the most often mentioned organizational stressor to law enforcement personnel was their superior, mentioned by 42% of the study sample of 205. And more recently, a study by Storch & Panzarella (1996) found that administrators was ranked as one of the three top dislikes about being a police officer.

One of the primary conclusions of the 1991 Crank and Caldero study was that “concerns over equitable treatment in assignments and promotions, malicious and self-protective behavior by supervisors, ambiguous policies and rules, and fears of internal review and investigation describe a complex web of organizational stress from which there appears to be no relief within the occupation of policing.”

Supervisors or administrators seem to practice or perpetuate the practice of stress-causing policies or procedures. Some of the more frequently mentioned or identified policies and procedures said to cause law enforcement stress are discussed below.

### ■ *Perceived favoritism by administration regarding assignments/promotions*

Five percent of the respondents in the 1991 Crank and Caldero study identified favoritism as a source of stress, with comments suggesting reservations about the fairness of departmental opportunities for promotion. One respondent comments regarding favoritism - “is it already well known in advance by supervisors which of their buddies they want promoted, and who will be held back regardless of ability. Awards and evaluations are doled out to build or destroy careers.”



# Organizational Stressors

Maynard and Maynard (1982) categorized this as “mystifying promotional practices,” and said this contributed more to stress than dangers associated with law enforcement activity.

In 1995, Kirkcaldy et al found that their sample of police officers in Illinois rated stress more likely from the structural design of their department and organizational processes of their department, attributing it to an apparent separation between administrative officers and the line supervisors and officers.

More currently, a study of approximately 1,100 Baltimore City Police Department sworn law enforcement officers (Gershon, 2000) called “Project SHIELDS” reports that only 16% of respondents agree or strongly agree that promotions are tied to ability and merit.

- *Second guessing of officers’ actions and lack of administration support\**

Violanti & Aron (1995) found that the second highest ranked organizational stressor was inadequate support. The study by Anson, Johnson, & Anson (1997) show that lack of support by agency is the highest rated source of stress for police officers. This source of stress has a mean stress level of 3.58, with 4.00 meaning high stress and 5.00 meaning extreme stress. Gerson (2000) reports that only 8% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the administration supports officers who are in trouble.

- *Inconsistent/Arbitrary disciplinary actions*

Excessive or inconsistent discipline is also an area of higher stress for law enforcement professionals. Although phrased differently in different studies, disciplinary actions seem to be an area of concern. Townsend (1998) found that the third highest rated source of stress was being disciplined inappropriately. Violanti & Aron (1995) found that the fifth highest ranked organizational stressor was excessive discipline.

Looking at it another way, one study found inconsistent enforcement of rules based on the officer’s gender. Over 40% of respondents in the Project SHIELDS study (Gershon, 2000) agree or strongly agree that the department tends to be more lenient when enforcing rules and regulations for female officers.

- *Cultural diversity and political correctness*

The 1996 NIJ report says this source of stress involves not only formal department policy but also perceived pressure from administrators and colleagues. Not only may there be “reverse discrimination” in hiring/promoting practices, but there is more of an emphasis or scrutiny on political correctness in the language and actions of the officers. However, this report states the diversification and political correctness policies may decrease the stress levels of minority groups (racial, ethnic, gender, or sexual orientation).

Some other administrative organizational stressors, according to the NIJ, include:

- *Lack of adequate training or supervision*
- *Frequent transfers*
- *Police grapevine (gossip, lack of privacy)*
- *Offensive policies*

# *Organizational Stressors*

## ➤ Workplace perception of discrimination and inequity\*

Gershon (2000) finds that perceived gender discrimination and inequity is one of the most significant stressors, with women law enforcement officers more likely to report this as a source of stress than men. More specifically, 37% of respondents in this study feel they are less likely to be chosen for certain assignments because of their personal characteristics (e.g. race, gender, or sexual orientation). This was consistent among male and female respondents.

Overall, 29% of respondents say that gender related jokes are often made in their presence. Female officers are significantly more likely ( $p<.05$ ) to agree or strongly agree to this statement (43%) than male officers (27%).

Although only 18% of respondents say they feel they are more likely to be more criticized for their mistakes compared to peers of the same rank, women again are significantly more likely to agree/strongly agree (29%) to this statement than male officers (16%). In addition, 11% of officers in this study feel that female officers are held to a higher standard than male officers.

## ➤ Lack of reward or recognition for good work

Police officers are more frequently disciplined or reprimanded for poor performance and rarely rewarded or recognized for good work. Administrators feel particularly good in their jobs when they received recognition from either their superiors or the public. (Kroes et al, 1974). More recently, Anson, Johnson, & Anson (1997) shows that lack of recognition for good work is the third highest rated source of stress for police officers, with a mean level of 3.18 (or moderate stress).

## ➤ Perceived excessive or unnecessary paperwork\*

This poses stress to both officers and administrators, but for different reasons. The patrol officers find it stressful in that reports must be completed and are many times never used. As stated by Eisenberg (1975) “all too often the need, purpose, and value of this paper work is called into serious question by the officer” and equates the situation to numerous research reports gathering dust on their shelves. Administrators, on the other hand, dislike the amount of paperwork resulting from complaints against subordinates (Kroes et al, 1974).

## ➤ Antagonistic “subcultures” within departments/units/shifts/squad

The Project SHIELDS study measured this source of law enforcement officer stress. Only half of the study respondents agree or strongly agree that there is good and effective cooperation between units. Older law enforcement professionals (over 50 years of age) are significantly ( $p<.05$ ) more likely to feel this way than younger officers.

## ➤ Lack of input into policy and decision making

This stressor has been found to effect law enforcement personnel at all hierarchical levels. (Violanti & Aron, 1995; Kroes, Hurrell & Margolis, 1974; Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974). More recently, the Project SHIELDS study (Gershon, 2000) reports that 26% of respondents feel that that if they do act assertively or question the way things are done, they are considered as militant.

# Organizational Stressors

## ➤ Police culture (*machoism, code of silence*)

Blackmore (1978) contends the macho image of a police officer may well inhibit police from seeking treatment. Many officers are reluctant to seek counseling partly because of their self-image. It is a police officers job to help others, which makes it hard for them to admit they need help. Another reason for not seeking help is the fear of being labeled sick or crazy. Despite the wealth of research findings that law enforcement professionals are highly stressed, there is still a stigma attached to seeking counseling in law enforcement. Officers needing counseling are fearful of being perceived as weak and unreliable by both their peers and the administration. In addition they may fear losing their job. Although the chances of that happening are low, going on light duty or having their gun taken away is a legitimate fear and a prohibitive factor to getting help (Martin, 1994).

However, Martin (1994) states that this culture may be changing, due to higher educated officers who are more aware of the potential stressors to the law enforcement occupation. The supervisors are said to be more enlightened and more likely to understand the subtleties of life. And more resources are available, with more and more psychologists and counselors who are aware of the police culture and how it works.

## ➤ Lack of career development opportunities, with resulting competition among officers

Due to the growth in corporate and government America from the late 1940s to the mid-1970s, there were unprecedented opportunities for promotions as the country's need for managers outstripped its supply. However, starting in the mid 1980s, the growth in the size of police departments, as well as corporate organizations, has stagnated with a bulge in middle management positions, resulting in downsizing and flattening of agencies. This ultimately resulted in a generation of officers who will not likely be promoted, despite their well-established beliefs which equates promotion to their value within the agency and personal competence. The paramilitary structure, with uniform insignia and rank structure, makes the older officer keenly aware, on a daily basis, of his or her lack of promotion. (Grossman, 1994)

The 1991 Crank and Caldero study found that 8% of respondents cite advancement and assignment as a source of organizational stress, typically focusing on the limited opportunities for rank within the agency. Anson, Johnson, & Anson (1997) report that lack of promotional opportunity is the second highest reported stressor. This source of stress is reported to have a mean stress level of 3.29 (or moderate stress).

## ➤ Shift work\*

As concluded by Swenon, Ph.D. (1997), "shift work is a necessity in industrialized nations and particularly for continuous operations and emergency services. The impact of shift work on the body clock can produce adverse physiological, psychological, and behavioral problems that interfere with job performance and satisfaction. Family and social involvement can also suffer."

In a study conducted by Storch and Panzarella (1996) of 79 police officers in the United States (state unknown) using likes and dislikes of the job as measures of stress, a poor work schedule was listed as the top dislike about being a police officer. Violanti and Aron (1995) also found this to be true. In their study, using the 1981 Police Stress Survey developed by Spielberger, Westberry, Grier, and Greefield, the highest ranked organizational stressor was shift work.

# Organizational Stressors

The 1991 study by Crank and Caldero found that the second most frequently mentioned source of organizational stress was shift work (17%). Half of these responses were attributed to rotating shifts and the other half was attributed to the midnight shift. In addition, shift work was said to increase the level of personal stress by its effect on the disruption of family life.

The impact of shift work on law enforcement stress is not a new phenomenon. Maynard and Maynard mention this as a source of stress in their 1982 study. Kroes et al (1974) also reports this is a higher source of stress for officers, being the second highest stressor (or bothersome aspect of the job) next to administration, with 56% of the response.

## ➤ Financial or Economic Issues

### ■ *Fiscal uncertainty, flattening of law enforcement agencies, and lack of job security*

As mentioned before, the flattening or downsizing of agencies resulted with a bulge of middle management positions, resulting in a generation of officers who will not likely be promoted. This not only affects the psychological well being of officers, but affects the family as well. As career level increases, it follows that their family income is expected to increase. Without the advancement in career, law enforcement officers (and their families) do not progress financially as anticipated. (Grossman, 1994)

In the 1997 study by Anson, Johnson, and Anson, inadequate number of personnel is the fourth highest source of stress for police officers. Similarly, the 1998 study by Townsend shows insufficient personnel is the second highest source of stress among state police personnel.

### ■ *Equipment deficiencies or shortages*

Townsend (1998) reports that inadequate equipment was the ninth highest source of stress among state police personnel. This stressor has also been identified as far back as 1974 (Kroes et al). In this study, it was the third highest source of stress with 39% of the response. This includes equipment in disrepair, specifically the lack of maintenance and condition of patrol cars.

## *Differences in Organizational Stressors by Title, Rank, or Responsibility*

Comparing the sources of organizational stress by job title, some differences do emerge. Looking at only those stressors categorized as organizational, high-ranking officers were more likely to be stressed due to work overload and work ambiguity. Subordinates, on the other hand, were more likely to be stressed by superiors and equipment deficiencies (Kroes et al, 1974).

Superiors seem to be a major cause of stress for police officers, whether it is the superior personally or the superior's responsibility for enforcing organizational procedures or policies. However, it has been shown that superior officers are also affected by organizational stress. In some cases, the stress factors are similar or shared, but in many cases the causes or types of organizational stress to superiors can, and do differ from those of the subordinates.

## *Organizational Stressors*

Back in 1974, Kroes, Margolis, & Hurrell conducted two studies on the Cincinnati Police Department, one with line officers (N=100) and the other with administrators (N=30). These studies uncover differing stressors for the differing levels of a law enforcement organization. These reports conclude that the line officers' stress emanate from a threat to their professionalism. Specifically, "courts, administration, equipment deficiencies, and community relations are major problems because they confront the individual, providing negative input to their self-concept and perceptions of themselves as a professional." The professional effort in capturing a suspect goes unrewarded when the courts release the offender or impose a light sentence. Their professionalism is also offended by the treatment of court officials. They are never thanked for their efforts in appearing in court, even when doing so is a hardship to them. They are also treated disrespectfully by judges.

The results of the 30 interviews with the administrators confirm the differing stressors of administrators. The top mentioned stressors to these respondents are: work overload (having more work than can be done in a given period of time) mentioned by 73%, work ambiguity (decision making without sufficient information) mentioned by 70%, and community relations (public apathy, negative reactions to and lack of support of policemen) mentioned by 60%. The authors summarize that the administrator is the "man in the middle" with demands placed upon them from the community, superiors and subordinates.

In 1995, Crank, Regoli, Hewitt & Culbertson (1995) conducted a larger scale study on the *Institutional and Organizational Antecedents of Role Stress, Work Alienation, and Anomie Among Police Executives*. This project studied 1,125 police executives of municipal and county police agencies. This study focused on three types of stress (or **stress constructs**) specific to police executives:

1. Role stress – *stress derived from the characteristics of occupational roles*
2. Work alienation – *minimization of personal investment in the importance of the work process or product, promoted by blocked goals and lack of control over the work product* (Regoli, Culbertson, Crank, & Powell, 1990)
3. Anomie – *perception that there are no normative guides to direct individual behavior (individuals confront differing expectations with statuses they are expected to uphold i.e. loyalty to other officers, organizational manager, contact for the media, public or other group, etc)*

The study measured the effect of seven **institutional or organizational variables** on police executive stress.

- 1) Minority Issues (*or the employment of minorities*)
- 2) Personnel Relations (*the relations of chiefs with other sworn personnel in the department*)
- 3) Public Relations (*problems associated with the public and the media*)
- 4) Department Issues (*budget, personnel retention, and employee labor organizations*)
- 5) Criminal Justice System
- 6) Hiring Control (*perception of control over the hiring process*)
- 7) Complexity (*number of ranks/divisions in the organization*)

# Organizational Stressors

*Influence of Institutional/Organizational Variables on the Stress Constructs:*  
( $p < .05$  or at a 95% confidence interval)

Role stress (*stress derived from the characteristics of their role*) was significantly associated with public relations and department issues or problems. It was also associated with the perception of control over the hiring process. This means as the severity of these problems increase, their level of role stress increases.

Work alienation stress (*minimized investment in importance of process promoted by blocked goals and lack of control*) was significantly associated with minority issues and control over the hiring process.

Anomie stress (*lack of guidelines for behavior*) had significant associations with most of the stress-inducing variables. Those are (in order of influence on anomie type stress) department issues, public relations, personnel relations, the criminal justice system, and minority issues.

Interestingly, one of the organizational variables on police executive stress, complexity, was associated with all three stress constructs, however the direction of the relationship was inverse, in that as the complexity of the organization increased, the level of stress in all three stress constructs decreased. The authors interpret this finding as meaning the organizational complexity was experienced positively as task variability. This is consistent with related research conducted by Jackson & Schuler in 1985.

One of the main hypotheses in this study was that the organizational and institutional stresses have a negative effect on police executives, even if the executive has personal or individual characteristics (education, ethnicity, and experience) that can positively influence their reaction to stress.

First, the study proved that police executives with higher education, more experience, and a higher commitment to public service had significantly ( $p < .05$ ) lower levels of stress in each of the three stress constructs. However, once the institutional and organizational stress variables were included in the analysis of the variance (ANOVA), the positive effects of the personal characteristics that reduce stress disappeared in terms of levels of *role stress*. The study suggests that efforts to hire police executives with individual characteristics that might better prepare them for the stresses of the position or role will be less than successful if the institutional and organizational sources of stress are not recognized or addressed.

Conversely, the effects of education, minority status, experience, and belief in public service on the *work alienation* stress construct remained significant even in the presence of the organizational and institutional role stressors. The authors translate this finding to mean police executives with the individual characteristics shown to reduce their level of stress remain invested in their work, even in the face of the adverse or stressful organizational conditions.

Another interesting finding in this study was that police executives that were hired using civil service exams had the lowest levels of anomie type stress while those executives selected or hired by seniority had the highest anomie stress. Elected chiefs had the highest levels of role stress.

## ***Organizational Stressors***

Following are the specific inter-organizational stressors, or those with other police organizations within or around their jurisdiction, as identified by the National Institute of Justice. Unfortunately, research studies measuring the impact of these stressors were not uncovered.

### ➤ Lack of career development

This source of stress is also considered an inter-organizational stressor. For more detailed information on this topic, please see the discussion on lack of career development opportunities in the intra-organizational stress section.

### ➤ Jurisdictional isolationism

A study measuring the effect of this type of stress was not uncovered in this literature search, however it seems pertinent to this research. The author that initially presented this source of law enforcement stress, Terry Eisenberg, is a police officer in the San Jose Police Department. He did not conduct any research in identifying this and other stress sources, they are just personal observations and feelings while functioning as a patrol officer. This was presented at an interdisciplinary symposium sponsored by NIOSH in 1975. However, his categorization of stress types and the specific stressor within each category have been used in the 1996 NIJ publication, *Developing a Law Enforcement Stress Program for Officers and Their Families*. It also appears in a “training key” developed by the International Association of Police Chiefs. His categories and types stressors also serve as the basis for the design of this section of this report.

Eisenberg explains the situation of jurisdictional isolationism: “Law enforcement agencies tend to operate in a vacuum within their own jurisdiction. Boundary lines are jealously guarded and therefore restrict the degree of cooperation among police agencies.” He presents this stressor as being more evident to ranking police personnel and investigative staff due to their more frequent contacts with other police agencies than uniformed patrol officers.

## *Social Stressors*

Social stressors, or those stressors related to the officer's family, friends or colleagues, were not specifically evaluated very often in other studies.

The types of social stressors identified in the literature search include:

- Family\*
- Criticism from neighbors, relatives or acquaintances
- Less socializing among officers

The family was probably the social stressor that caused the most stress to law enforcement professionals. Although few statistics were found on exactly how much stress is caused by the family, several sources discussed the family's role in the stress level of law enforcement professionals.

An officer may be unwilling to use his family for support, creating tension in the family unit (Martin, 1994). This can then cause a breakdown of communication. Another element involved is the "take charge" law enforcement personality, which is biased against listening skills, problem solving, and negotiating differences, critical for successful families (Bradstreet, 1994). Another element present in the law enforcement family dynamics is job loyalty.

### ➤ Family

In 2001, the International Labour Organization presents that countless surveys have confirmed the influence of families in raising the stress level of individuals, and also states that it is particularly true in families where both parents work or in single parent families. They present a number of organizational factors that makes it difficult to balance work and home responsibilities including abrupt changes in work schedules (especially shift work and irregular working hours), unsympathetic treatment by management and co-workers, and lack of control over the content and organization of work.

A law enforcement family is subject to unique stressors affecting all members of the family that non-law enforcement families typically are not exposed to on a routine basis. An in-depth discussion of these stressors is beyond the scope of this study, however the major issues will be addressed.

The officers' family can play a dual role on an officers' stress level. On one hand the family can play a positive role, decreasing law enforcement stress by supporting and understanding the special needs and challenges of law enforcement. On the other hand, the stress from the requirements and responsibilities of law enforcement can increase the level of stress on law enforcement families. In fact, 73% of the respondents in the Project SHIELDS study (Gershon, 2000) say that some officers would put their work ahead of anything, including their families. And this opinion is similar to those of the spouses. In Maynard and Maynard (1982), about three-fourths of police wives believed their husbands regarded their police work as more important to them than their own families and wives.



## *Social Stressors*

Families need time and attention and this places more demand on the officers' time and attention. According to Irene Schreiber, the former President of the Suffolk County Police Wives Association (and a police wife), communication between spouses and children can disintegrate, further increasing the level of stress on an officer and their family. Physical attention or intimacy can also decrease, increasing the personal distance between spouses. In addition, the "take charge" police behavior is a bias against listening skills, problem-solving and negotiating differences, which is critical for successful families (Bradstreet, 1994). Scenarios such as these often lead to divorce or separation, which only presents another layer of problems for law enforcement families.

Another layer in this problem is the officer may be unwilling to use his family as a source of support (Martin, 1994). Within their day, they may see or experience disturbing situations and they do not want to "bring it home with them." The officer does not share this disturbing experience with their spouse, thus creating tension between them says Schreiber. Or officers turn to alcohol or drugs after these types of experiences, which then begins yet another set of family problems.

Ms. Schreiber also says spouses may feel alone and isolated, having to many times play the role of both parents, many times being forced to make important decisions alone. Children may often times not see their parent for days or weeks at a time, due to conflicting or rotating schedules. Having a "cop" as a parent, fearing retribution or teasing from friends or schoolmates may also embarrass children.

A total of 6 respondents to the Crank and Caldero study (1991) indicated personal or family concerns as a primary source of stress, naming their children, the effects of the rotating schedule on family life, and lack of understanding from their spouse.

### ➤ Criticism from neighbors, relatives or acquaintances

According to Scrivner & Reese (1994), communities often hold officers and their families to a different standard of behavior in comparison to individuals in other occupations. The community expects officers to be readily available in off hours as well as expects law enforcement families to be free from family conflicts.

### ➤ Less socializing among officers and their spouses

According to the 1996 NIJ report, less and less bonding among officers and their families is emerging causing less clannishness and less camaraderie among officers. This may also effect a loss of support in stressful situations. Several causes are presented. One is the increase in usage of fixed shifts allowing for more scheduled family time or commitments and thus reducing the officer's time "with the boys" after their shift. Another potential cause is more wives are working and spending less time with the wives of other officers. Also, this report states that there is increased recognition among the younger officers of "life outside of the badge," leaving them less inclined to spend time with other officers.

However, this may also be a positive trend in that it may strengthen the relationship within the family, which can aid in recognizing and/or decreasing (or not increasing) the stress level of the law enforcement employees.

## ***Personal or Individual Stressors***

The amount of stress caused by each type of stressor identified in this report may vary in degree within differing occupations or personalities. Business professionals, for example, may experience high levels of organizational stress such as poor supervision, or lack of career growth or development, but may not experience high levels of stress from the other external sources of stress. Similarly, manufacturing employees may be more affected by occupational stressors, such as productivity demands, than other external sources of stress.

Law enforcement professionals are unique in this regard, in that they can and usually do experience high levels of stress from all four external sources of stress simultaneously. Kroes, Margolis, and Hurrell (1974) concluded that although police officers face many stressors common to other work groups, there is an additional important group of stressors not faced by others - the fact that a police officer is set apart from the rest of community. Thus, police work becomes one of the few jobs which has a potent adverse effect on the total life of the worker. The police officer's job affects their own personal social life, their family's social life, their children's perception of them as a parent, etc. Additionally, police work is among a few occupations where the employee is asked to put his life on the line and may face physical danger at any time. These additional stressors not only have a significant impact on their own, but they likely serve to reduce the tolerance necessary for handling other job stressors.

Law enforcement stress levels are relative to the individual, in terms of their level of experience and position in the organization, as well as the experiences encountered within their responsibilities. It is also dependent upon the individual's personality and coping mechanisms. Unfortunately, this was another area where little statistical information was available. In addition, no one type of personal stressor could be identified as more stressful than another. Personal or individual stressors include:

- Fear of doing something against regulations or being second guessed
  - Anxiety about their competency to do the job well
  - Need to take a second job
  - Anxiety over the responsibility to protect the public
  - Disappointment when job expectations are not met or differ
- Fear of doing something against regulations or being second guessed  
Most respondents (88%) in the Project SHIELDS study (Gershon, 2000) agree or strongly agree that they have had to make split second decision on the street that could have had serious consequences.
- Worry about their competency to do the job well  
In contrast, two respondents mentioned stress as beneficial to sustaining their motivation for police work in the Crank and Caldero study (1991). These respondents viewed stress as a personal motivator for becoming a "good police officer."
- Need to take a second job (leads to tiredness/burnout)  
Some articles point out that due to the lack of advancement in police agencies, officers sometimes must find additional employment to supplement the finances needed for their homelife, sometimes called stacking of employment.

Other personal stressors were uncovered, although no supporting statistics have been found. These other stressors include: the officer's anxiety over the responsibility to protect the public (*"with 20 weeks training"*) and disappointment when own high expectations are not met (*a law enforcement career is expected to be exciting and glamorous but really involves boredom and disrespect*).

## *Demographical Influences on Stress*

The influence of demographics on stress is inconsistent in the reviewed literature. Some studies may prove that a personal characteristic helps to decrease stress or acts as a guard against stress while others do not find this to be true.

The demographic characteristics more frequently analyzed include:

- ◆ Experience level
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Marital Status/Number of Children
- ◆ Race/Ethnicity
- ◆ Rank/Job Title
- ◆ Sexual orientation

### ➤ Experience Level

Violanti & Aron (1995) found respondents with six to ten years of service reported a higher organizational and job inherent stressor mean score than all other years of service variables. In addition, a significant difference in perceived organizational and total stressor scores was found between officers with one to five years experience and six to 10 years of police service. They attribute this to “reality shock,” defined as the realization that police work is more stressful and frustrating than originally perceived. Officers with less experience were said to be high on idealism and enjoy the challenge of policing (Violanti, 1983). Like Violanti and Aron, Haarr and Morash (1999) found that the number of years in law enforcement was significantly related to stress level ( $p < .01$ ). Crank, Regoli, Hewitt & Culbertson (1995) also proved this to be true with police executives ( $p < .01$ ).

An interesting concept has been uncovered regarding the relationship between job experience and job stress and has been proven by other studies. Patterson (1992) discusses the results of a study of 500 police officers from 21 departments conducted by Violanti in 1983. Violanti’s study identified a statistically significant curvilinear relationship between job experience and perceived stress for police officers. Officers with the least and most experience on the job reported lower levels of stress compared to officers with intermediate experience or years on the job. White, Lawrence, Biggerstaff, & Grubb (1985), Stotland (1986), and Stotland, Pendleton & Schwartz (1989) identify this same trend. Patterson (1992) also repeated the same curvilinear relationship between job stress and officer experience as initially presented by Violanti (1983).

Different authors explain this curvilinear relationship differently. Stotland (1986) and Stotland, Pendleton & Schwartz (1989) offer the explanation that time on the job reduces stress and strain because time on the job enhances competence and self-confidence, however, Patterson (1992) argues that this explanation fails to account for increased levels of perceived stress among less experienced officers. Gaines & Tubergen (1989) conclude that officers with more experience have learned to cope with the job and that experience and current job assignment have pronounced effects on one’s perception of stress. Patterson (1992) presents another theory for the decrease in job stress for more experienced officers, being that those officers most bothered by stress left the job within the first 11 years, and the ones that remain either perceived less stress or developed adequate coping techniques.

## ***Demographical Influences on Stress***

Violanti (1983) as well as Gaines & Tubergen (1989) suggest that stress parallels cynicism and both increase continuously during the first two of four stages of police work. The four career stages of police work described by Violanti are:

<b>Career Stages of Police Work</b>			
<b>Stage</b>		<b>Job Experience</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.	Alarm Stage	0 to 5 years	Reality shock that police work is more stressful and frustrating than originally perceived
2.	Disenchantment Stage	6 to 13 years	Realization they are having little effect on crime and the ideals they brought to the job are far from reality
3.	Personalization Stage	14 to 20 years	Renewed emphasis on personal goals rather than work related goals and worry less about the demands of policing
4.	Introspection Stage	Over 20 years	More introspective of the “good old days” and less worried about the demands and failures and more secure in their jobs

There is some dispute in the onset of the introspection stage. Violanti (1983) presents 20 years as the threshold while another study (Gaines & Tubergen, 1989) found that officers enter this stage after 12 years.

### ➤ Education

Ayres (1990), quoting a study by Carter, Sapp, & Stephens (1989), reports that educated officers have a wider range of performance skills that are more effective than those of non-college officers, including the following: being more global in their thinking, adapting better to change, having good relationships outside the police community, and having better written and oral skills.

The effects of education on stress are inconsistent. In the 1996 study by Storch and Panzarella, no relationship has been found between education and stress. Crank, Regoli, Hewitt & Culbertson (1995), however, prove that police executives with higher education had significantly ( $p < .01$ ) lower levels of stress. Gershon (2000) finds the opposite in her study. In this study, officers with less than 16 years of education report lower levels of stress than those with at least some college education.

### ➤ Age

In the Violanti & Aron study (1995), respondents in the 31 to 35 age group report organizational stress as the most intense, especially shift work. The intensity of perceived stressors decreases after age 46. In this study, age and job experience are closely correlated, in that they present the same relationship, with the middle categories expressing the higher levels of stress.

# *Demographical Influences on Stress*

## ➤ Gender

Violanti and Aron (1995) found no differences in perceived organizational stress based on the gender of the law enforcement officer. The study by Gershon (2000) also shows no significant differences in levels of work stress by gender.

## ➤ Children/Family

More state anxiety was associated with officers who fewer children. (Storch and Panzarella, 1996).

## ➤ Race

Violanti and Aron (1995) found no differences in perceived organizational stress by race. Conversely, Gershon (2000) reports that Caucasian officers are more likely to report stress than non-Caucasian officers.

## ➤ Rank

Storch and Panzarella (1996) found no significant differences in state (now) or trait (in general) anxiety by officer's rank. Gershon (2000) also found stress is not significantly correlated with rank or job category.

However, Violanti and Aron (1995) found differences in perceived organizational stress between rank. Townsend (2000) also reported differences in organizational stress by rank, however it is unknown whether the differences are statistically significant.

Haarr and Morash (1999) found that rank was related significantly to occupational stress level, in that higher ranking officers are more likely to report high stress levels ( $p < .05$ ).

## ➤ Personality Type

Law enforcement professionals are typically Type A personalities. The "Type A Personality" was developed in 1959 by two cardiologists, Drs. Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman. Their definition is based on an analysis of decades of research. They state:

A person with a Type A Personality:

- has a chronic sense of time urgency and always rushed and hurried and on edge.
- has quick and abrupt speech, often interrupting others
- is very competitive – even in noncompetitive situations
- is a hard-driving, achievement-oriented, and status-conscious person
- frequently becomes hostile and aggressive

Atkinson (1988) also adds that Type A Personalities are more likely to be critical, undemonstrative, less interested in family than work, and more likely to blame others or external circumstances when things go wrong or goals are frustrated. According to Contrada (1989), Type B Personalities refers to the relative absence of the Type A characteristics and a more relaxed style of coping. According to Grenshaw (1996), individuals with a Type A Personality are two to three times more likely to suffer angina, heart attacks, and sudden death. However, others have failed to confirm a relationship (Contrada, 1989).

## ***Demographical Influences on Stress***

Of these demographics, years of experience (or experience level) in the law enforcement profession was most consistently related to stress level. As the number of years in the profession increased, the level of reported stress also increased. Violanti (1983), Violanti & Aron (1995), Harr & Morash (1999), Crank, Regoli, Hewitt & Culbertson (1995), White et al (1985), Stotland (1986), Stotland et al (1989), and Patterson (1992) all had found this to be true.

Of the remaining demographics, education, gender, race and rank seem to be the most disputed, with some researchers finding a relationship while others were unable to do so.

## ***Consequences of Law Enforcement Stress***

The consequences of law enforcement stress can be felt at both the individual and organizational level. On an organizational level, the consequences are more financial, including lost work days, lower productivity, health and workers compensation costs, employee turnover (training costs) and possible legal fees. Individually, the consequences of stress can be physical or psychological, behavioral, emotional, or occupational. Organizations and individuals can and do experience one or more of the consequences simultaneously.

### ***Organizational/Occupational Consequences of Stress***

Overall, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that stress costs American businesses about \$10,000 annually per employee, or a total of \$300 billion. A 1993 study by the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated that stress costs US employers \$200 billion a year in absenteeism, lower productivity, rising health and workers compensation costs and other expenses. According to the National Institute of Justice (2000), the occupational effects of stress are employee absenteeism, performance, early retirement, reduced morale, excessive aggressiveness, and an increase in citizen complaints.

Unfortunately, little current information was found on the occupational consequences of stress in law enforcement, specifically reduced morale, aggressiveness, or early retirement. However, some information was found in more dated studies on absenteeism and reduced efficiency, with the information sometimes more anecdotal than specific. But in both cases, a relationship was found between stress and these occupational consequences (Tang & Hammontree, 1992; Goolkasian et al, 1985).

#### ➤ Absenteeism

In terms of lost work days, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the US Department of Labor reported that the median number of lost work days among private employers in 1999 due to stress was four times the level of all non-fatal occupational injuries and illnesses that same year. The ILO (2000) reported that over half of all the 550 million working days lost each year are related to stress. Another source (CCH Inc.) states that absenteeism related to employee stress has tripled since 1995.

In a study of the effects of life stress and police stress on absenteeism and illness (Tang & Hammontree, 1992), investigators found that police stress significantly affects both illness and absenteeism.

According to the Lost-Worktime Injuries and Illnesses report by the US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (1999), there were 3,418 cases of occupational stress among private employers in 1997. The median absences from work for these cases were 23 days, more than four times the level of all nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses. More than 40% of the cases resulted in 31 or more lost work days, compared to 20% for all injury and illness cases.

According to a survey of 305 human resource officials by CCH Inc., a human resources consulting firm in Riverwoods, Illinois, stress as a source of worker absenteeism has tripled since 1995. According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, in the US, over half of the 550 million working days lost each year due to absenteeism are stress related.

#### ➤ Reduced efficiency in performing duties

# *Consequences of Law Enforcement Stress*

Goolkasian et al (1985) indicates that law enforcement stress has been associated with occupational performance and professional relationships within the department.

## ➤ Health Care Costs

According to a 1998 study by the Health Enhancement Research Organization (Goetzel, Anderson, Whitmer, et al.), stressed employees cost 46% more in health care costs than non stressed employees. In comparison, employees who smoke cost 20% more in health care costs than those who do not. Gershon (2000) estimated that stress-related illnesses cost about \$200,000 annually for psychiatric services and \$250,000 to \$300,000 for medical expenses, which amounts between \$450,000 to \$500,000 for psychiatric and medical expenses combined.

## ➤ Employee Turnover

Another fiscal cost of law enforcement stress is employee turnover. The amounts vary widely, some ranging from \$40,000 (Gershon, 2000) to \$1,000,000 (NIJ, 1996). Included in these figures are the costs for hiring/screening of candidates, training recruits, and retraining officers.

## ➤ Litigation Costs

In addition, aberrant behaviors due to adverse effects of law enforcement stress (such as inappropriate behavior e.g. excessive force or brutality) cost departments money in terms of legal fees (due to lawsuits) and/or re-marketing campaigns due to public complaints (Gershon, 2000).

## *Physical Consequences of Stress*

One consequence of law enforcement stress is decreased or impaired physical health. According to a report from the International Labor Organization (ILO) in March, 2001, stress has been correlated with a myriad of consequences such as fatigue, depression, insomnia, migraines and abuse of tobacco and alcohol.

Other physical effects with supporting statistics include those listed below. Those with an asterisk denote the physical consequences evaluated in Phase 2 of Step 1 of the WisDOT study.

- ◆ Cardiovascular disease\*
- ◆ Alcoholism and substance abuse\*
- ◆ Chronic back pain
- ◆ Psychosomatic illnesses

Fortunately, this was one area where statistics were uncovered specific to law enforcement personnel.

## ➤ Cardiovascular disease

Cardiovascular disease is frequently mentioned as an effect of stress, typically an outcome of long term stress. According to a case study by HeartMath of seven police agencies, police officers are twice as likely as people in other occupations to develop cardiovascular disease and they are at a greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease than high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, or smoking.

## ➤ Alcoholism and other substance abuse



## *Consequences of Law Enforcement Stress*

In a study of 2,300 officers in 29 different police departments conducted by Kroes and Hurrell (1975) 23% had serious alcohol problems and 10% had drug problems. More recently, the study by Gershon et al. in 2000, Project SHIELDS, reflecting the results of a study of over 1,100 officers, reported that officers reporting high stress were five times more likely to report alcoholism. One main deterrent for seeking help for an alcohol problem is the fact that the officer would have to obtain treatment along with the general public in the group therapy component of a recovery program (Martin, 1994). There is a concern that what is said in the group may be carried into the streets.

In terms of both alcohol and substance abuse, officers are at risk to their job due to zero-tolerance policies if they are found to be under the influence while on duty. In some cases, off-duty officers can be disciplined if they were found to be operating a vehicle while under the influence. However, if an officer seeks help or treatment on their own prior to any discipline or arrest, they cannot be terminated according to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Abuse of alcohol or drugs is categorized as an escape or maladaptive coping technique and many studies report that law enforcement officers, as well as those in other occupations, use alcohol or drugs to help relieve stress.

### ➤ Chronic Back Pain

Thirty five percent of respondents in the Project SHIELDS study (Gershon, 2000) with high stress levels indicate chronic lower back pain as an outcome.

### ➤ Other Physical Symptoms

In various articles, many other physical effects of stress were indicated including hypertension, gastric and duodenal ulcers, and kidney disease, heart attacks, and weight gain. However, no exact statistics were uncovered. It has also been linked to psychosomatic illnesses or aches and pains with no specific cause uncovered. Gershon (2000) found that officers who have experienced stressful events or report high stress were five times more likely to report psychosomatic symptoms.

The ILO also states that long term stress can contribute to hypertension, the development of heart and cerebrovascular disease, as well as peptic ulcers, inflammatory bowel diseases and musculoskeletal problems. It has been shown to alter immune functions, which may lead to the development of cancer.

According to the Project SHIELDS study (Gershon, 2000), officers with high stress levels are 30% more likely to report poor health or health problems than those with lower stress levels.

# *Consequences of Law Enforcement Stress*

## *Behavioral Consequences of Stress*

Stress has also been shown to affect the behavior of law enforcement professionals, either consciously or unconsciously. Behavioral effects follow along a continuum that can include:

1. Underlying stress not yet manifested in outward effects
2. Mid-level stress, manifested by excessive drinking or unacceptably high number of citizen complaints.
3. Debilitating stress, resulting in inadequate job performance, severe health problems or suicide.

The behavioral consequences of stress discussed in the literature search were:

- ◆ Critical Incident Stress or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder\*
- ◆ Burnout
- ◆ Depression/Anxiety\*
- ◆ Suicide/Suicidal thoughts\*
- ◆ Cynicism and suspiciousness

### ➤ Critical Incident Stress (CIS) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can occur as the result of exposure or involvement in a critical incident, such as the shooting or death of oneself, a fellow officer, or another person in the line of duty.

The American Psychiatric Association defines PTSD as the development of characteristic symptoms following a psychological traumatic event that is generally outside the range of usual human experience. These characteristic symptoms include recurring and intrusive thoughts of the event (e.g. flashbacks) and avoidance (e.g. hypervigilance, suspiciousness) lasting days, weeks, or years depending on the intensity of the stressor and the emotional susceptibility of the police officers following massive sensory stimulation. Keane (1989) presents that there are both positive and negative symptoms of the disorder. Positive or reactionary symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, hyper-arousal, and outbursts of anger. Negative or avoidance type symptoms include numbing, cognitive impairments, amnesia and restricted affect.

The most experienced symptoms include recurrent recollections of the event (47%), sleep disturbance (40%) and hyperalertness or exaggerated startle response (32%).

### ➤ Burnout

Defined as emotional exhaustion and cynicism characterized by workers who psychologically detach themselves from the job and become apathetic, cynical, and rigid, a condition believed to be brought on by chronic stress. Burnout can be psychological, physiological, and behavioral.

### ➤ Depression/Anxiety

Project SHIELDS, (Gershon et al., 2000) reported that officers reporting high stress were ten times more likely to experience depression than other officers and six times more likely to report anxiety.

# ***Consequences of Law Enforcement Stress***

## ➤ Suicide/suicidal thoughts

In a 1994 study of 134 officers referred for fitness of duty evaluations (Janik & Kravitz), officers who reported marital problems are almost 5 times as likely to have attempted suicide ( $p=.0003$ ). Officers who have been suspended is almost 7 times more likely to do so ( $p=.0009$ ). Demographics, drugs or alcohol problems, or stress are not significantly related to suicide attempts. Conversely, perceived administrative harassment demonstrated a strong protective effect against suicide, however the results were not statistically significant. However, the author states confirmation of results is needed with larger samples and more collateral histories from the families and police force. Kroes (1985) and Gershon (2000) also found law enforcement officers more likely to have suicidal thoughts than most other occupations.

## ➤ Cynicism and suspiciousness

There are many reasons law enforcement officers are suspicious of others. In order to be successful in getting the needed facts and investigating crime, officers must develop a “sixth sense” about when people are lying. The police culture also pressures officers to become suspicious in that rookies are critiqued for being too easy in believing suspects stories and are consequently burned by this more trusting attitude (Bradstreet, 1994).

## ***Emotional or Social Consequences of Stress***

Several studies were uncovered that found work problems affected the family more intensely than family problems affected work (Kroes, 1974; Bartolome & Evans, 1980; Bolger et al, 1989; Leiter & Durup, 1996).

The emotional or social consequences of stress frequently discussed in the more recent literature were:

- ◆ Marital/Relationship Problems\*
- ◆ Divorce\*
- ◆ Domestic Violence
- ◆ Detachment from Life

## ➤ Marital/relationship problems (*extramarital affairs, divorce, domestic violence*)\*

In *Developing a Law Enforcement Stress Program for Officers and Their Families* by the National Institute of Justice, the most common problems police counselors' treat is difficulties with intimate relationships. They reference a study that found the most commonly cited sources attributed to family stress are shift work, cynicism, fear of being hurt or killed, excessive high expectations of children, harassment or avoidance of children, and a gun in the home.

This finding has been uncovered as far back as 1975 (Kroes & Hurrell). In the 1975 Kroes and Hurrell study, 36% of officers had serious marital problems and 10% had serious problems with their children. Violanti, Marshall, and Howe (1985) mention this also.

## *Consequences of Law Enforcement Stress*

Bartolome and Evans (1980) acknowledged that family experiences can have an impact on work, but proposed that work experiences are more likely to influence family. Bolger et al. (1989) and Leiter & Durup (1996) corroborated that the daily influence of work on family was more pronounced than the reverse. Kroes et al (1974) report that 98% of the married police officers in their study (81%) said that police work did affect their homelife. The same trend is reported in the study of police executives (1974). In both studies, not having enough time with their children and lack of family social events are among the top three mentioned consequences of a law enforcement career.

Interestingly, in a study of another high stress industry, hospitals, Leiter & Durup (1996) reports that family personal conflict was the only predictor specific to the family domain that had a direct relationship with the work domain. This means family personal conflict contributed to the prediction of work overload as well as to work interference with family.

### ➤ Divorce\*

A study of approximately 250 experienced officers conducted by Gentz & Taylor in 1993 finds that just over half (51%) of responding officers report being married and divorced at least once. In addition, more of the respondents believe that officers have a higher rate of divorce than the general public (73%) and that being a police officer has had more of a negative impact on their marital status (66%). Almost half (47%) of respondents who have ever been divorced, regardless of their current marital status, think their law enforcement career contributed quite a bit or a great deal to their getting divorced.

These results are consistent among respondents with differing marital status, with two exceptions.

1. Respondents who have never been married were equally split on the belief that police officers have a higher rate of divorce than the general public, with half who agree and half who do not.
2. Respondents who have been divorced two or more times are much less likely to think that their law enforcement career did not play a role in their divorce compared to others who have only been divorced once.

### ➤ Domestic Violence/Abuse

A study by Neidig, Russell, and Seng (1992) report that 40% of police officers commit domestic violence themselves, meaning 4 in 10 of officers responding to a scene of a domestic violence dispute may be abusers themselves. A more recent study (Gershon, et al., 2000) found significant associations between police stress and family violence and assault. In this study, nine percent of officers reported physically abusing a spouse or domestic partner, nine percent reported assaulting their children and seven percent reported assaulting another officer. This study also found that officers reporting high stress were three times more likely to abuse spouses or partners than officers with low stress levels, suggesting the need to study the relationship between police stress and hyperaggressive behavior among police in general.

### ➤ Detachment from Various Aspects of Daily Life

Although no exact statistics were found, this behavioral consequence of stress has been discussed anecdotally.

## *Coping Strategies to Law Enforcement Stress*

Although most research focuses on the causes of stress, how an individual copes with stress and stressors is a concern because coping strategies can ironically, alleviate as well as cause stress (Fain and McCormick, 1988). Whether a situation is evaluated as stressful depends in part on the individual's ability to cope with it, reinforcing the need to understand the role of coping in the stress process (Haarr & Morash, 1999).

The 1999 Haarr and Morash study discussed/tested 11 different coping strategies:

- 1) Change job assignment
- 2) Escape (ignore/live with situation, suffer in silence, avoid superiors/coworkers)
- 3) Express feelings (to coworkers)
- 4) Formal action (legal action, complain to superiors, seek professional help)
- 5) Get others to like me
- 6) Coworker camaraderie (blow off steam, seek help from coworkers, seek extra training/education)
- 7) Form racial bonds
- 8) Keep written records
- 9) Support from superior (encouraging/finding better ways of getting work done)
- 10) Support from coworkers (encouraging/finding better ways of getting work done)
- 11) Support from family (turn to family for support and advice on dealing with stress)

This study reports that high-stress officers were more likely to use escape, express feelings of anger/hurt to coworkers, get coworkers to like them, keep written records, and rely on support from coworkers, superiors, and family than those officer's with a low level of stress. In addition, this report found that as the mean level of stress decreased the reported use of these coping methods also decreased. Similarly, Violanti (1992) finds in his study of police recruits that people who are placed in stressful situations do not attempt to deal with stress and the problems that generate stress through a step-wise process (increasing the number of strategies used), but rather by "giving it all they have."

Haarr and Morash (1999) also show a relationship between stress and coping, in that some coping strategies become predictors of stress and that an officer's stress level group (high or low) depends on the specific coping strategies used, respondent characteristics, and department size. In their study, six coping strategies have a significant effect on stress level (change job assignments, escape, express feelings of anger/hurt to coworkers, take formal action, and rely on support from coworkers and family). This means that officers who do not change job assignments, use escape as a coping strategy, express feelings to coworkers, do not take formal action, or rely on coworker and family support are more likely to have high stress levels.

# *Coping Strategies to Law Enforcement Stress*

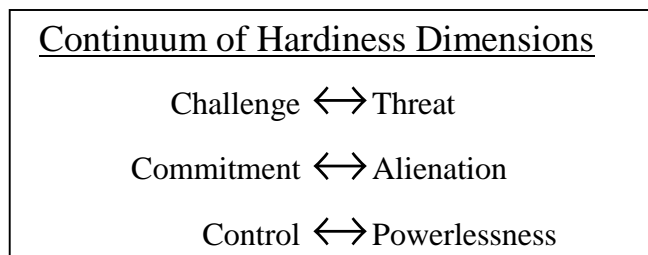
## **Hardiness**

Another concept said to have an influence on stress is hardiness. Hardiness is a resistance resource or buffer against the health damaging effects of stress (Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982). It is a personality style that shows commitment, control and challenge. (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984). Their model of hardiness is based on studies investigating the relationship among hardiness and behavioral and psychological constructs.

They present three dimensions of hardiness:

1. Challenge – *consider it natural for things to change and anticipate the changes as a useful stimulant to development*
2. Commitment – *find it easy to be interested in whatever they are doing and can involve themselves wholeheartedly*
3. Control – *believe and act as if they can influence the events taking place around them*

The three dimensions of hardiness, as described above, are not static dimensions and are presented as on a continuum. Persons with high scores across all three dimensions of hardiness orient their world as not being alienated, powerless, or threatened in or by their workplace or activities (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984). High hardy persons appraise a task as less threatening, have increased tolerance to frustration, and display less adverse affective and psycho-physiological stress responses (Weibe, 1991).



An exhaustive literature review of Funk in 1992 supports the construct of hardiness as proposed by Kobasa (1979) but the most valid scale available is the Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS) by Bartone et al. in 1989. Ramanaiah, Sharper and Byravan (1999) successfully used the DRS to demonstrate hardiness as an indicator of mental health.

## *Demographic Correlations of Hardiness*

Hardiness is not strongly correlated with or is independent of ethnicity, religiosity, education level of self or parents, or age. Hardiness is not correlated with exercise habits, although hardiness and exercise both act as stress buffers (Kobasa, Maddi, & Puccetti, 1982).

# *Coping Strategies to Law Enforcement Stress*

## **Relational Communication**

Relational communication is defined as verbal and nonverbal expressions that indicate how two or more people regard each other, regard their relationship, or regard themselves within the context of the relationship (Burgoon and Saine, 1978). They are distinct from other message types designed to carry task instructions or manage identity formation. Burgoon and Hale (1987) identified eight dimensions of relational communication.

1. Immediacy/affection – *measure of intimacy, specifically the perception of closeness and attraction*
2. Similarity/depth – *measure of intimacy, involving similarities between persons and the depth of their conversations.*
3. Receptivity/trust – *openness, listening, honesty and trust*
4. Composure – *conversant's degree of calm, comfort, and nervousness*
5. Formality – *extent to which the communication was formal, or not casual*
6. Dominance – *extent to which the conversant attempts to influence the other or control the conversation*
7. Equality – *measure of being treated as equals and of cooperation in the conversation*
8. Task Orientation – *measure of the degree to which the messages used task-oriented or personal*

## *Hardiness and Relational Communication*

Iowa State University's School of Communication (2001) is conducting a study to determine the relationship among law officers' hardiness and the relational communication they experience at work. It states that significant changes in the workplace should be expected to result in changes of hardiness, in that there should exist events and relationships in a working environment, that if changed, would result in increased or decreased perceptions of challenge, commitment and control (hardiness). And as the events and relationships change, one would also expect to see changes in the relational communication.

Iowa State University's study consisted of 107 respondents including 69 sworn officers and 38 non-sworn employees. They administered the Disposition Resilience Scale (DRS) questionnaire and the Relational Communication Scale (RCS) questionnaire, asking respondents to consider their working environment when completing the DRS and their communication with their supervisor when completing the RCS.

Within their research, the three hardiness dimensions and the overall hardiness score were significantly correlated with each other ( $p < .01$ ) as was the relational communication dimensions.

### ➤ *Challenge Dimension*

Comparing the hardiness dimensions with the relational communication dimensions, the challenge dimension of hardiness shows much less of a relationship with most relational communication dimensions, significantly correlated with only receptivity/ trust, composure, and equality. The author interprets that the results could be a function of the hierarchical, paramilitary structure of public safety organizations. Change comes and moves slow, and messages delivered with comparatively high degrees of trust, composure and equality helps employees make more productive sense of the organizational changes.

# *Coping Strategies to Law Enforcement Stress*

## ➤ *Commitment and Control Dimensions*

Due to similarity in results, these two separate dimensions are discussed together. The commitment and control dimensions of hardiness are similarly correlated with all relational communication dimensions except for task orientation. The author interprets this as the more committed a worker is, and the more in control of one's job one feels, the more likely the pro-social relational communication dimensions will be perceived as evident in the workplace. Commitment and control are negatively correlated with formality and dominance, somewhat anti-social communication dimensions. This distancing, or focus on status, may make workers feel less committed and less in control. Another interpretation is that persons with high in commitment and control perceived low formality and low dominance, meaning the focus of the communication in the organization was not on maintaining status.

One area where commitment and communication differed in this study is in relation to the task oriented relational communication dimension. Commitment was strongly correlated with task orientation, while control was not. Since commitment reflects interest in what a person is doing, messages about their tasks would be perceived positively. On the other hand, task oriented messages would likely decrease perceptions of control.

## *Conclusions of the Study*

The author concludes that because relational communication can improve and hardiness buffers adverse reactions to stress, he suggests organizations take efforts to increase hardiness and relational communication to decrease stress. However, it raised an issue that hardiness involves personal perceptions, and it is unlikely that a change in hardiness will directly affect relational communication. But it states it may cause the person to act differently, thus the more individuals who increase their hardiness and act differently, it may be possible to affect the overall relational communication of the organization.

Because hardiness and relational communication are significantly correlated, an increase in relational communication would increase hardiness, thus hardiness can be increased by an increase in relational communication. For example, perceptions of control will increase as the organization changes to give employees more responsibility or control. Formality or dominance is negatively correlated with control, or has a negative effect on the perception of control. Thus decreasing formality and dominance of messages should increase the perception of control.

Challenge can be increased by new tasks, increasing the importance of a new task or a change in the recognition system. The challenge dimension of hardiness is significantly correlated with receptivity/trust, composure, and equality. An increase in the perception of fairness and openness of the message could increase the challenge dimension, meaning changes in an environment would not be negatively perceived. Subsequent research (2002 & 2003) is currently underway to prove these results.



# *Coping Strategies to Law Enforcement Stress*

## **Other Coping Techniques**

Other literature presents four approaches or strategies to dealing with stress, with two being positive approaches and two being negative in nature.

### Positive approaches

- 1) Cognitive approach – *own ability to make a plan of action to manage stress (talking to friends, family, prayer counselors)*

Kirkaldy et al (1995) finds that police personnel were more likely to use social support as a coping mechanism, especially talking to superiors and understanding friends than those in the general employed population. This study also reports that the law enforcement respondents were more likely to deal with problems as they occur and get involved in the process by recognizing their own limitations and look for ways to make work more interesting.

In 1998, Townsend shows that support from family or co-workers are the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> top strategies used in coping with stress, with 73% and 63% of the response, respectively. Talking with superiors ranks 10<sup>th</sup>, utilized by only 39% of the sample. However, in terms of effectiveness in coping with stress, respondents to this study rate family or co-worker support as “effective” and supervisors as only “somewhat effective.” Talking with friends as a coping mechanism is used by just over half of respondents (57%) but is considered “effective”.

Gershon (2000) reports that officers who rely on cognitive approaches are less likely to report high levels of stress.

- 2) Active behavioral approach – *exercise or hobbies*

Townsend (1998) reports that active behavioral coping strategies, namely personal hobbies and exercise, are utilized by over three-fourths of the respondents and these two strategies are considered the most effective in coping with stress compared to all other strategies studied.

Gershon (2000) finds that officers who use active behavioral approaches have less stress-related adverse outcomes (psychological and physical outcomes) but do not typically report less stress.

### Negative Approaches

- 3) Passive behavioral approach – *sleeping or watching TV*

In Townsend’s study (1998) the most frequent strategy to cope with job stress is watching TV, however it’s effectiveness in coping with stress is considered only somewhat effective. Gershon (2000) finds similar results in that officers who rely on passive behavioral approaches did not have a reduction in stress levels.

## ***Coping Strategies to Law Enforcement Stress***

### **4) Maladaptive coping mechanisms – *yelling, smoking, overeating, drugs/alcohol***

As far back as 1985, Violanti found that police tend to use maladaptive techniques. Although these techniques may provide immediate stress relief at the moment, they may easily generate into self-defeating strategies that create even more problems for officers and increase their stress over time.

Townsend (1998) finds that maladaptive approaches are among the least utilized and least effective in coping with stress. However, of the four maladaptive approaches studied (legal/illegal drug abuse, alcohol, smoking, and excessive eating), alcohol consumption was more often used than the other three.

Gershon (2000) proved that officers who rely on maladaptive mechanisms are not only less likely to report a decrease in stress as an outcome of these activities but also are more likely to report adverse health conditions.

### ***Different Coping Strategies of Different Demographics***

An annual study conducted by the National Center for Women & Policing reports that, in the year 2000, women comprise 13% of all sworn law enforcement positions nationwide in 2000, up from 9% in 1990. The most recent statistics for racial categories, from a 1997 report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, indicates that almost 10% of all sworn law enforcement positions are held by African-Americans. These percentages are based on the total municipal, county, and state law enforcement agencies in the US with 100 or more employees.

With that in mind, it is important to understand the differences in coping techniques used by men compared to women and African-Americans vs. Caucasian in policing.

In terms of demographics, Haarr and Morash found little significant gender differences except that women are more likely to use the escape coping strategy than men are.

However, racial differences were more pronounced. Caucasians were more likely than African-Americans to cope using escape, expression of feelings, trying to get others to like them, and coworker camaraderie. African-Americans, on the other hand, are more likely to form bonds with coworkers with whom they share a racial bond. But African-Americans may be more aware of turning to members of their own racial group. Caucasian officers, despite their tendency to turn to other Caucasian officers, may not think of that as racial bonding but more likely as seeking coworker camaraderie.

# ***Comparison of Literature Search Findings to WisDOT Law Enforcement Stress Study***

## **Background**

At the request of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), The Dieringer Research Group (The DRG) is conducting a study of stress among sworn officers in the Division of State Patrol (DSP). The principal objective of the entire study is to help WisDOT/DSP understand stress among sworn officers and to assist WisDOT/DSP in developing appropriate and feasible intervention techniques that will help officers reduce and/or more effectively deal with stress.

## **Methodology**

In order to secure a high response rate for the study, WisDOT mailed a notification letter announcing and explaining the study to the homes of all DSP sworn officers prior to the questionnaire distribution. This letter was developed jointly by WisDOT and The DRG. Also, an announcement was made in the district Green Sheets. A reminder notice was placed in the district Green Sheets, as well as a report of pertinent study findings to participants.

The questionnaire was developed by The Dieringer Research Group, Inc. and was reviewed and approved by the WisDOT. The questionnaire collected information on the level of overall and job-related stress, the sources of stress, the personal experiences of sworn officers, the stress reduction services available/used, as well as a short respondent profile (gender, age, rank, and length of time as a sworn officer).

The DRG mailed the survey questionnaire, including a postage paid return envelope addressed to The DRG, to the homes of all 530 sworn officers on February 15, 2001, using labels provided by WisDOT. The DRG was not electronically provided mailing information for the sworn officers, nor did it retain a copy of the mailing labels. All questionnaires were anonymous in that no identifying codes were used on the questionnaire to track respondents nor were any questions asked that would uniquely identify a respondent (such as position number or birth date).

Of the 530 questionnaires distributed, a total of 362 completed questionnaires were returned to The DRG by the deadline date of March 7, 2001. This equates to a completion rate of 68%. During the data tabulation, significance testing of percentages (z-tests) and means (t-tests) was conducted at a 95% confidence level.

The Detailed Findings for this phase of Step One are discussed in a previously submitted report: The Wisconsin Department of Transportation Division of State Patrol, Law Enforcement Stress Study: Internal Evaluation, Project ID: 0092-01-07.

## ***Comparison of Literature Search Findings to WisDOT Law Enforcement Stress Study***

In general, the respondents to the mail study are representative of the DSP sworn personnel overall. A demographic comparison of the questionnaire respondents and the actual WisDOT DSP sworn personnel (Year 2000) is shown in the table below.

<b>COMPARISON OF 2000 SURVEY RESPONDENTS TO ACTUAL 2000 DSP SWORN EMPLOYEES</b>		
	<b>DSP Sworn Personnel Survey Respondents</b>	<b>Actual DSP Sworn Personnel<sup>7</sup></b>
<b>N=</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>472</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	85%	86%
Female	15%	14%
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 29	16%	16%
30 – 39	39%	39%
40 – 49	35%	33%
50 – 59	10%	12%
<b>Title</b>		
Trooper	67%	64%
Sergeant	10%	11%
Inspector	18%	19%
Other	4%	5%
<b>Years of Service</b>		
Less than 5 years	20%	20%
5 to 9 years	14%	20%
10 years or more	66%	60%

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<sup>7</sup> Source: WisDOT

# ***Comparison of Literature Search Findings to WisDOT Law Enforcement Stress Study***

This comprehensive study of 362 sworn state patrol officers measured the level of overall stress (including work, family or any other type) and job-related stress. In addition, job-related stress was further studied in each of the four external sources of stress: organizational (8 sources), occupational (4 sources), environmental (2 sources), and social (1 source). Personal or individual stressors, or those attributed to an individual's personality were not studied. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of stress using a 5 point semantic differential scale with "1" meaning "Not at All Stressful" and "5" being "Very Stressful."

## ***Overall Stress vs. Job-Related Stress***

Older respondents (aged 30 and over), high ranking officers (sergeants to colonels), and sworn officers for five or more years are significantly more stressed on the job as well as overall.

This trend that the older and more experienced sworn officers are more stressed matches the results found by Violanti & Aron (1995). However, the curvilinear relationship identified by Violanti (1983) and repeated by White et al. (1985), Stotland (1986), Stotland et al (1989) and Patterson (1992) cannot be determined with the results of the WisDOT DSP study. In order to prove that the WisDOT DSP sworn officers have the same curvilinear relationship, the data must be categorized similarly, specifically 5 years or less, 6 to 10 years, and more than 10 years. This cannot be done because the length of time as a sworn officer in the WisDOT study was categorical (less than 5 years, 5 to 9 years, and 10 or more years) and cannot be separated into matching groups.

## ***Main Sources of Stress***

Like the results found in the literature search, most of the main sources of stress for the DSP sworn officers were organizational. Of the 15 sources of stress measured in this study, four of the top five were organizational. The four top stressors considered organizational were: superiors second-guessing their actions (66% rated it using a "4" or "5"), superiors in DSP (54%), shift work (45%), and combination of too many pressures (43%). The other top source of stress was occupational, namely danger on the job, ranked as third with 46% of the top two ratings.

## ***Sources of Organizational Stress***

Within the organizational stress category, this study measured the level of stress caused by eight different sources. The top five organizational stressors are second-guessing, superiors, shift work, too many pressures combined, and paperwork.. These results are consistent with many other studies reviewed in the literature search (Violanti & Aron, 1995; Anson, Johnson & Anson, 1997; Gershon, 2000; Kroes et al, 1974; Storch & Panzarella, 1996; Crank & Caldero, 1991).

◆ Superiors second guessing your actions	66%
◆ Your superiors in DSP	54%
◆ Shift work	45%
◆ Combination of too many pressures	43%
◆ Paperwork on the job	34%

# ***Comparison of Literature Search Findings to WisDOT Law Enforcement Stress Study***

## *Demographic Comparisons of Organizational Stressors*

- Age

In general, there were no significant differences by age for most of the organizational stress sources studied. Of the few significant differences, middle-aged respondents (30-49) were significantly more likely to mention shift work as highly stressful compared to other officer's aged 18 to 29. This is somewhat consistent to the findings by Violanti & Aron (1985) in which it was reported that respondents in the 31 to 35 age group consider shift work among the most intense organizational stressors. Respondents aged 40 to 49 were more likely to mention a combination of too many pressures was highly stressful compared to those under 40 years of age.

- Gender

Significant differences between the opinions of male officers versus female officers were uncovered for only one organizational stressor, specifically superiors in DSP. More females rated this as a high source of stress compared to male sworn officers. This is generally consistent with the studies conducted by Violanti & Aron (1985) and Gershon (2000).

- Rank

- Troopers were significantly more affected by second-guessing than other higher ranking (sergeant to colonel) respondents and more affected by gender issues than Inspectors.
- Both Troopers and the high ranking officers were significantly more likely to mention shift work and paperwork on the job than Inspectors.
- Higher ranking officers were more likely to mention other officers as a source of stress and a combination of too many pressures compared to both Troopers and Inspectors.
- No significant differences were found by rank or hierarchical level regarding their superiors in DSP and racial and ethnic issues, with each level almost equally rating this factor as highly stressful.

In general, state police officers seem to differ from police departments in terms of organizational stress. The studies of city police departments by Storch & Panzarella (1996) and Gershon (2000) found no significant differences in the level of organizational stress by rank. However, two studies of state police agencies, Nebraska State Patrol and New York City Police, (Townsend, 2000 and Violanti & Aron, 1995) do support a difference in organizational stress by rank.

# ***Comparison of Literature Search Findings to WisDOT Law Enforcement Stress Study***

- Experience or Time on the Job

DSP sworn employees with more experience (10+ years) were significantly more likely to rate most of the organizational stress sources studied as highly stressful, specifically their superiors, second guessing, other DSP officers, and shift work compared to those with less than five years experience. These respondents were more likely to mention paperwork and gender issues as stressful, but this was significant over only those with five to nine years experience and not those with less than five years experience.

Again, this is similar to the Violanti & Aron (1995) study which found differences in organizational stress by job experience, however their study shows that respondents in the middle categories of experience, six to 10 years of experience, express a higher level of organizational stress. This difference may again be attributed to the experience categories used in the WisDOT questionnaire. Had the categories matched Violanti's, the results could be different.

## Sources of Occupational Stress

This study measured the effects of four occupational stressors on the stress level of DSP sworn officers. Of these three occupational stressors, danger on the job was more stressful for more DSP sworn officers than public attitude, overtime, or risk of contracting disease. However, overall it was only moderately stressful, similar to the study by Anson (1993). Interestingly, Crank & Caldero (1991) reports that the public image of law enforcement officers accounted for almost 29% of all the occupational stressors mentioned in their study.

◆ Danger on the job	46%
◆ Attitude of the public toward law enforcement	28%
◆ Concern about contracting disease, such as HIV/AIDS	20%
◆ Overtime or extra hours worked	15%

## Sources of Environmental Stress

The impact of the environmental sources of stress on law enforcement stress measured in this study had almost an equal amount of respondents considering them highly stressful, but the percentage of those considering these sources highly stressful was rather low. These findings are consistent with the findings of Anson et al (1997).

◆ Courts and the criminal justice system	31%
◆ Media coverage of law enforcement	23%

## Sources of Social Stress

In this study, we measured the impact of one social stressor, namely home life or family life. Overall, only 15% of respondents considered this highly stressful, with no significant difference by respondent demographics or level of job-related stress. However, those respondents who were highly stressed overall were more likely to consider their home life as highly stressful compared to those with a lower level of overall stress.

# ***Comparison of Literature Search Findings to WisDOT Law Enforcement Stress Study***

## ***Consequences of Stress***

### Physical Consequences

There were a total of nine physical consequences of stress evaluated in this study. However, in the study, these consequences were not presented as stress related. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they experienced these consequences, regardless of whether they attributed them to stress. Overall, the findings of the WisDOT study found that highly stressed officers were significantly more likely to report suffering from most of the physical consequences of stress measured in the questionnaire, specifically 6 of the 9 physical consequences measured. The physical consequences of stress measured in this study with the most marked difference between highly stressed and less stressed officers include:

◆ Panic attacks	2.4 times more likely
◆ Other serious medical problems	2.1 times more likely
◆ High Blood Pressure	1.8 times more likely
◆ Forgetfulness	1.7 times more likely
◆ Sleeplessness	1.6 times more likely
◆ Listlessness	1.4 times more likely

The other physical consequences studied (alcohol/drug abuse, diabetes, and heart attack) showed no significant differences between more and less stressed officers. This is inconsistent with the findings by Gershon (2000).

### Behavioral Consequences

In the WisDOT study, highly stressed respondents were significantly more likely to experience most of the critical incidents than less stressed respondents. Especially knowing an officer who committed suicide, being injured in the line of duty, and seeing another officer injured in the line of duty.

◆ Know officer who committed suicide	2.3 times more likely
◆ Been injured in the line of duty	1.9 times more likely
◆ Seen officer injured in the line of duty	1.6 times more likely
◆ Know DSP officer killed in the line of duty	1.4 times more likely
◆ Attended a funeral of a law officer killed in the line of duty	1.3 times more likely
◆ Had a near miss in the line of duty	1.2 times more likely
◆ Seen victims killed /badly injured	1.1 times more likely

For the two other behavioral consequences of stress evaluated were suicide and depression, it was found that highly stressed sworn employees were about two or more times as likely to have considered suicide, similar to Kroes (1985) and Gershon (2000). In terms of depression, DSP likelihood was much less than that uncovered in Gershon's study (10 times as likely).

◆ Considered Suicide	2.5 times more likely
◆ Diagnosed as Depressed	2.0 times more likely
◆ Gained/Lost Too Much Weight	2.2 times more likely
◆ Flashbacks	2.0 times more likely



# ***Comparison of Literature Search Findings to WisDOT Law Enforcement Stress Study***

## Emotional/Social Consequences

Highly stressed DSP respondents were also found to be more likely to suffer from most of the social consequences of stress in this study. Kroes & Hurrell (1975) and Violanti, Marshall & Howe (1985) also found that many officers had marital problems.

- ◆ More Irritable or Quick Tempered 1.5 times more likely
- ◆ Serious Marital/Relationship Problems 1.4 times more likely

There were no significant differences in experiencing divorce between high stressed or low stressed respondents in this study. Domestic violence was not evaluated in this study.

## ***Utilization of Coping Strategies***

The WisDOT study evaluated only cognitive approaches, or those involving making a plan of action to deal with stress. All measures evaluated involved talking to someone, including family, friends, co-workers, supervisors, or counselors (both EAP or non-EAP). Overall, DSP sworn officers more often talked to other officers, family, or friends. Only 15% spoke to professional counselors.

Townsend (1998) measured 17 different coping methods, including both positive and negative approaches. Looking only at those measured in the WisDOT study, the results are consistent with the Townsend study. In both studies, the most utilized methods were talking to other officers, family, or friends. And in both studies, few (13% or 18%) sought professional counseling.

According to the Employee Assistance Program Association, the average utilization of an EAP is 6%. WisDOT's EAP utilization rate, which excludes non-EAP counseling, is 5%, just under the national average. What this should say is **“Five percent of the DSP sworn survey respondents reported they accessed EAP, which is just under the national utilization average of 6%.” This does not include utilization statistics from other areas of the department.**

<b>COPING STRATEGIES IN RESPONSE TO JOB-RELATED STRESS</b>		
<b>Action Taken</b>	<b>Percent Taking Each Action</b>	
	<b>Total WisDOT Sample</b>	<b>Townsend Sample</b>
N =	362	332
Talked informally to other officers	76%	63%
Talked with family	69%	73%
Talked with friends outside the department	54%	57%

## ***Comparison of Literature Search Findings to WisDOT Law Enforcement Stress Study***

Talked with another a professional counselor (EAP or non-EAP)	18%	13%
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